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The London Charivari

THE promised inquiry into relations between police and public is sure to run into the basic difficulty, that complaints against the police generally come from suspected persons. If a chap says he was beaten up in his cell, the quick answer is that he only says so to distract attention from his own misdeeds. In general I would rather believe a policeman than a crook; but how should we know if one day the allegation just happened to be true? It looks as if the inquiry will have to be run on the lines of the Wolfenden Commission (whatever became of those recommendations, by the way?), with the law-breakers given their head to reminisce unchecked and uncharged as if they were field-marshals.

Boots, Boots, Boots

I SUPPOSE that the long-distance walk by servicemen is bound to catch on: it has exactly the right qualities of absurdity and meaninglessness to capture the popular imagination. Meanwhile, I see that the two Sapper



lance-corporals who put up a record (London-Birmingham, 34h., 47m.) told reporters that they passed the time "cursing motorists." When this thing really gets going, and the motorways teem with long-distance walkers, the

boot (so to speak) may well be on the other foot.

Romany Respectability

A KENT Council is to provide permanent camping sites for gipsies, so that the children can go to the local schools and their parents will "grow roots." Resident gipsies are a refreshing



new idea, of course, and I am sorry to see that no spokesman for the local authority has stressed the need for their traditional colourful character to be retained at all costs.

While There's Life, Etc.

EVEN the professional visitor to the Olympia Building Exhibition has to be an expert at catalogue-map-reading—of the kind that calls for three thumbs—if he is to find his way from the wallpaper like glazed bricks to the bricks like glazed wallpaper. I felt rather sorry for Lord John Hope, who said that opening this biennial exhibition was one of the most pleasant duties of a Minister of Works. He spoke with the confidence of his recent predecessor on such matters as the danger of complacency, the need for continual effort and the size and complexity of the industry. Complexity is certainly the word. At what other



"Very well—if Eastbourne must have a Casino, I suggest the top of Beachy Head—very handy for the losers"

exhibition would you find a Daliesque tree of lavatory seats, a muck-shifter bedecked with flowers, two-yard lengths of "bird-baffling" blunted spikes for use on "important buildings" and an automatic ball-boy which throws forty tennis balls at five-second intervals?

History's a Blank

WE Observer readers, continuing Churchill's serialized *My Early Life*, and brought up for years on anecdotes about the great man's scholastic shortcomings, were surprised to find there was enough to make a whole instalment out of "What I Learnt at Harrow."

Young Idea

WHAT strikes me as most significant about the Rochford County Secondary School affair, in which parents of 283 children have been keeping them at home in protest at conditions there, is that so many parents—566, I suppose, actually—ever got together to agree on unified action. Mass parental pressure on school staffs and authorities is usually impossible, since apart from the occasional prize-day "Who's that with the Rolls-Royce?" "Nobody, Mummy, only Brown III's father," identities of parents remain unknown throughout an entire school career. Headmasters, wisely perhaps, can find no time for introductions, and only by the merest chance does a father who objects to the latest arbitrary rise in fees

run across a like thinker. Frankly, I think the parents now taking such a fine stand at Rochford were organized by the 283 children.

Sostenuto

NEXT month's "National Snake Charming Competition," as advertised, in Kensington is unlikely to yield anything more convincing than the authenticated experience of a coolie in Masai, Johore State, in 1937. He was surprised by a king cobra and sang to it for an hour. Then, running short either of songs or courage as the snake was poised to strike, he climbed a tree. The snake started to follow. The coolie started singing again. The snake stopped. A British estate manager arrived, sized up the situation, ran two miles for a gun, and returned to find the man still singing (relying no doubt on encore verses when his repertoire was exhausted), and the snake still in the same position. A bullet put the cobra out of his misery.

Far-Flung, Our Empire...

MEANWHILE, the Fiji Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals comments on the alleged practice of serving roast dog for Sunday dinner by the Solomon Islanders by explaining that this is the only meat they can afford. Moreover, since the dogs are humanely dispatched before consumption, the Society does not feel bound to take any action. This is all



"Maybe it's due to being over-subsidized."

The second in the series of drawings in colour by Hewison, "As They Might Have Been," appears on page 511. The subject is:

GRAHAM GREENE

very well, but I doubt if it will satisfy the thousands of dog-worshippers in this country. I predict that as a result of this report, ships bound for the Solomon Islands are leaving the Channel ports at this very moment, laden with sides of beef, Yorkshire pudding, Brussels sprouts, quick-frozen apple-pie and custard, and Sunday newspaper photographers agog to take snaps of grateful Fiji mongrels.

Publicist

WITH gasps of credulity, I have noted the advent here of Guido Orlando, an American public relations consultant whose clients include such un-shy figures as ex-King Farouk. It was inevitable, I suppose; Guido the Great, as he calls himself, was waiting only for Britain to become sufficiently publicity-conscious to deserve him. Certainly there are enough individuals and institutions whose relations with the public could do with some sweetening. Perhaps he might start with the Foreign Office. I'll believe he's great if he can gain acceptance for the suggestion that a lot of little surmises are really just as good as one big one.

Evasive Fact

THE Times says that Monsignor Heard may be the first Oxford rowing blue to become a Cardinal but adds sadly that "the point is not of a kind that can be immediately established from available Vatican archives." Given endless time to wander in a Kafka world of ever-receding files, any of which might contain information about bicycling cardinals or cardinals who played in *Macbeth* at school or cardinals who have been decorated for bravery while parachuting, the most fascinating news stories could be filed—but not on a rush job.

I Was a Teenage Bachelor

THE new romantic weekly *Honey* is "for the eager young bachelor girl of 15-24." A confirmed spinster of seven says she prefers *Harold Hare's Own Paper*.



BELLING THE WILDCAT

Libretto by GWYN THOMAS



PUNCH'S * BRITISH * MUSICALS

THE PELT OF THE CELT THAT BIT ME

THE Belmont Working Men's Non-Political Club. The club is in full session. Four dartboards are in commission and the play works to a steady rhythm, the four darters stepping simultaneously up to the mark. Ten members waiting for a crack at the snooker tables are broodily chalking their cues, also in rhythm. A group of members sit around a table where a senior wizard, URIAH REED, is intoning items from a massive Sports Almanack which was once touched by Billy Meredith who was capped a record number of times for Wales. In a corner one sees the caller in an endless game of housey-housey. Three men who try to start a conversation are spotted by the chairman and led to the bar, the snooker tables, the darts or URIAH REED's instruction in the new Koran.

CHORUS: Fugitives from thought are we
Sons of heavy industry.
Satisfied artisans, labour's cream,
We've sold the pass on dad's old dream.
We've buried Hardie, banished Marx,
Give us hedonistic larks.
Car in garage, cash galore,
Was ever life like this before?

HOUSEY-HOUSEY CALLER:
Better than a speech by Nye
Is the cry of Kelly's eye.
Kelly's eye, Kelly's eye.
Kelly knows. Kelly sees.
We've won a wondrous social ease.
All thought vanquished, crises past,
We're on the gravy train at last.

FULL CHORUS:
Fish and fish, to hell with chips.

MAN AT BAR:
Ten pints of best, twelve whisky nips.

SNOOKER PLAYERS:
Chicken suppers, trips to Spain.
No more conflict, park your brain.
For total peace inside your heads,
Take our cue and pot the Reds.

(A group hold out their pints to the blown-up photograph of the Pools winners.)

THE GROUP: To Banion, Evans, Jones, O'Toole,
The boys who copped it on the Pool.
Grant us knowledge of the laws
That rule the incidence of draws.

(Another group lift their mugs to a second portrait, this time of a broad, canny and masterful man.)

SECOND GROUP:

Here's to our mayor, Sir Iestyn Snook,
Who made a fortune out of haulage and never
read a book.

(In comes the entertainment secretary, HUGO BOONE, and behind him come a clutch of members carrying dishes of sandwiches, pickles and cakes.)

HUGO BOONE: Here are the eats, boys. For the party we are giving to our heroes, the lads from this very club who won the all British tug-o'-war championship. *(The members stand to attention and greet HUGO, the victuals and the news.)*

MAN AT DOOR: Here they are, here they come, the lads, and they've got the cup with them.

An impressive sight. The eight members of the tug team come in. They are Bryn, Glyn, Gwyn, Wynne, Hughie, Dewie, Teilo, Milo. They are all huge young men with a collective chest measurement just one foot short of the diameter of the Belmont gas container. Their anchor man, Milo, is a kind of Hackenschmidt squared. Their leader, Bryn, is carrying the silver cup. Around the neck of Milo is swathed the rope with which they won their last victory. They are all in their early twenties and drawn from the basic industries, steel, coal, transport etc. Each of the team is given a quart pewter pot full of ale and before they drink they give the following toast:

With jovial voice and open heart,
To the stomach walls we've jerked apart.

HUGO BOONE: Drink up, boys. You've come through your best season yet, leaving a widening wake of hostile hernias behind you.

BRYN: Thank Milo the anchor for that.

HUGO BOONE: But I've got bad news. The boys were too good. They whirled so many opposing teams around their heads like those South American bolas that there isn't a tug-o'-war team left in the country to challenge them. That championship might prove to have been their last pull.

CHORUS: Shame, shame.

Though plagues and bomba should menace
We'll not surrender hope,
Not with Milo bach the anchor resting calmly
on the rope.

(A young man of about twenty-two comes in. He is obviously a stranger and looks in complete bewilderment at the occupants of the club, especially at the tug-o'-war team. His name is PENRY CARTER.)

HUGO BOONE: You a member?

PENRY CARTER: Goodness, no. I am looking for the cultural class.

HUGO BOONE: The what?

PENRY CARTER: The cultural class.

HUGO BOONE: We don't like that word "class" about here. It's a dubious concept. That rich-and-poor stuff is outdated. We're all shot from the same cannon and it's up to you where you land.

PENRY CARTER: An educational class, a lecture.

HUGO BOONE: We've not had a lecture here since 1925. That was on the Sankey Award and Sankey himself came in to tell us we were taking it too slow. The place you are looking for is the Institute next door. A dusty hole.

PENRY CARTER: Dust I can take. Boy! You've got a right clutch of anthropoids here.

BRYN: And we won the silver cup as well.

GLYN: Anthropoids are what, Hugo?

HUGO BOONE: Apes, I think.

(Now begins a great ballet-like sequence with every member of the tug-o'-war eight taking turns at making savage taurine lunges at PENRY who nonchalantly sidesteps every assault with the clinical acuteness of Dominguin or Anton Dolin. The tug-o'-war boys go sprawling but the snooker players, the darters, tombola zombies and drinkers are not in the least put out. PENRY, unscathed, waves them all good night.)

PENRY CARTER: And my father told me that this place really throbbed once upon a time, had brain cells that lit up like Blackpool. Don't take the mind too much for granted, friends. It could slip away, you know.

(He nips swiftly through the door.)

HUGO BOONE: Are we worried?

THE ACOLYTES SITTING AROUND THE MAN WITH THE SPORTS ALMANACK:

In the name of Billy Meredith, the man with the magic boot,

Just tell the deviationist we do not give a hoot.

FULL CHORUS:

We've everything we've ever prized

In a Britain semi-socialized.

One tenth cultured, semi-free,

Fugitives from thought are we.

URIAH REED *(the wise ancient)*: There's only one thing lacking.

HUGO BOONE *(startled)*: What's that? He wants the lectures back. He wants arguments and the library back. Cancel his club card. Lock him in the cellar.

CHORUS *(to the tune of "Men of Harlech")*:

Dialectic, cease to tease us

Slumps will come no more to freeze us.

(They are interrupted by HUGO BOONE who steps up to URIAH REED, his finger rigid with angry accusation.)

HUGO BOONE: Is some treacherous spiritual value stirring under your old snow, Uriah? A frustrated lecturer, that's what you are. Forget what Dilke said in 1884 and stick to who won the Oaks in 1894. Or out you go.

URIAH REED: All I wanted to say was that that boy reminded me of Lenny Adams.

HUGO BOONE: Who's he?

URIAH REED: The greatest centre in the history of rugby football.

HUGO BOONE: That's different, Uriah.

URIAH REED: This town, this very club, once had a great rugby team. They went out of existence when they built the new loco sheds on their field. Their genius was Lenny Adams. The Twinkler they called him, for his wonderful sidestep. He played for Wales and scored the only try in the match that humbled England in 1907.

CHORUS: To Uriah Reed who has never been caught
On any question concerning sport.

Once a glibster in Marxist chatter

Now an expert on things that matter.

A man whose modest wits kept turning

Till he took the heartache out of learning.

(All lift noggins to the photograph of the Pools winners.)

CHORUS: And to Banion, Evans, Jones, O'Toole,
Whose luscious coupon scooped the pool,
Who found the golden road from need
On data supplied by Uriah Reed.

SCENE II

A very small room in the Institute. PENRY CARTER has just joined a class which is being taken by MR. WALDO WILSON. Across the table from PENRY is BRONWEN ADAMS, a very beautiful young woman who works with PENRY in the research wing of the steel works.

WALDO WILSON: The poetic awareness of the Welsh is being pressed out of existence by the muscular hobbledoys to whom rugby is a way of life, by a rancid radicalism which has transferred all sensibility from the soul to the wage packet, and by a horde of bawling hymnsters who wear banality like a second skin and whose only approach to catharsis is the odd funeral.

BRONWEN ADAMS: But the answer, Mr. Wilson, the answer?



"And watch your language, I'm not one of your West-end audiences!"

WALDO WILSON:

To a crude disease, a crude retort, my dear;
 A simple-witted chauvinism is the only thing, I fear.
 If the English flood our valleys we'll have water on the
 brain.
 They took away our birthright, now they take away our
 rain
 Gwalia's streams are sacred, Gwalia's water glows,
 The Saxons take it through the mouth, they should pay
 for it through the nose.
 Cymru's vales are holy, Wales's water's top.
 Let's charge the hangman's rate for it, fifteen quid a drop.

SCENE III

BRONWEN and PENRY are walking in a tiny dingy park in
 the middle of Belmont. Even the dwarf shrubs look shorter than
 usual, and statues of various pioneers who sank pits in and
 around the town stand at every corner.

BRONWEN: Mr. Wilson is wonderful. He is the new Merlin.

PENRY CARTER: He is. As he spoke and as I looked at you
 I could feel our hearts fusing together.

BRONWEN ADAMS: I'm so glad. Together we can break
 the pall of stupidity that hangs over this town. Take that
 club next door to the Institute. Humanly a stable. Sport,
 beer, women excluded, troglodyte sots. Will you promise to
 go in there? As a missionary, to speak to them once more
 of sensibility and dreams?

PENRY CARTER: I promise, Bron. I promise.

PENRY AND BRONWEN DUET:

Even here true love can capture
 Tenderness and lyric rapture.
 What sweeter road for lads and lasses
 Than extra-mural culture-classes?
 And let the id go right ahead
 With the blessing of the Min. of Ed.
 And bring fresh life with a warm embrace
 To the ghost of humanity's ruined grace.

(The statues join in in a muffled way.)

STATUES: We'd like to help this piece along
 With a bout of lusty, pious song
 But we think of the cost of these marble lines,
 And the soul repines.

SCENE IV

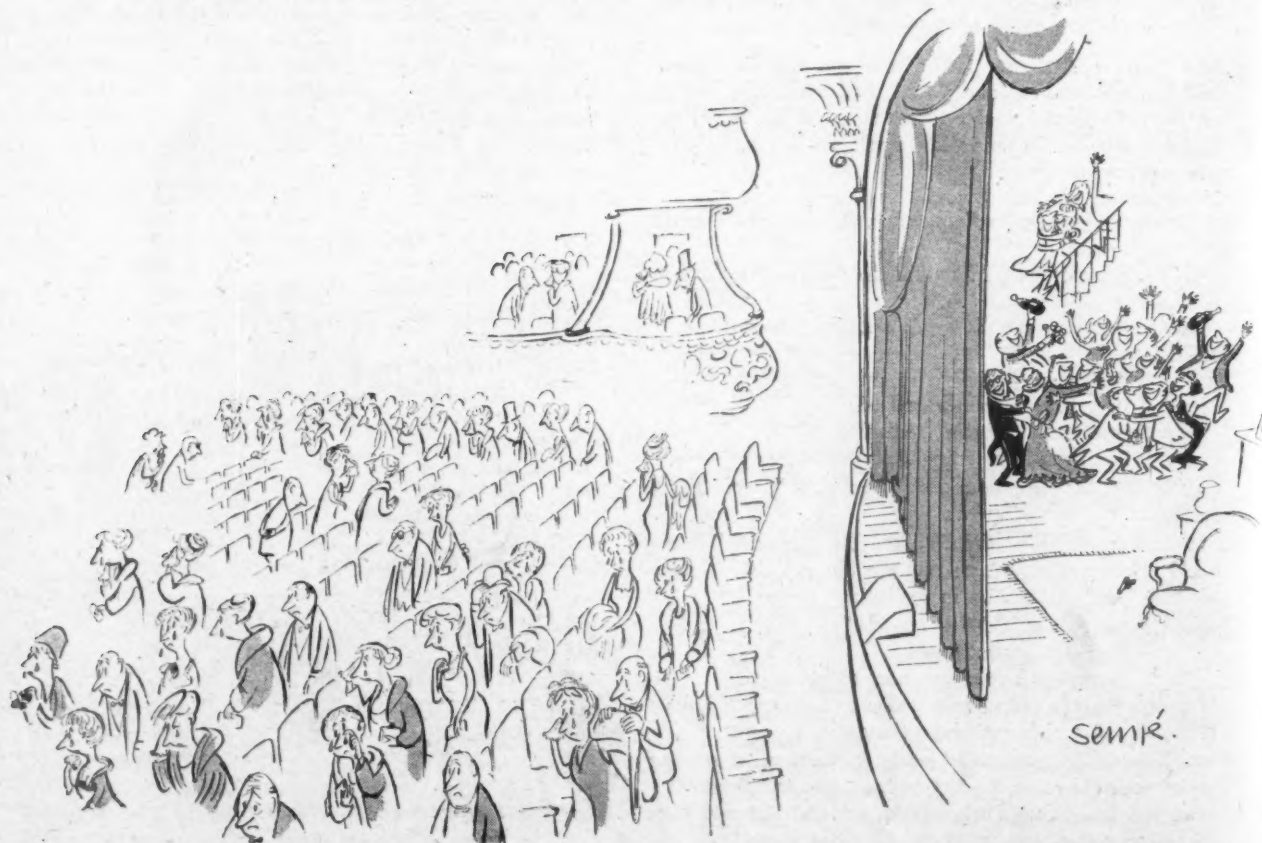
The Belmont Non-Political Club. The mixture as before.
 The tug-o'-war boys and HUGO BOONE are grouped around
 PENRY CARTER. They have pints. He is sipping a minute sherry.

PENRY CARTER: What we should do is submit sample
 fragments of your skulls for the carbon test. Vulcanized
 Kiplingites, that's what you are.

MILO: What's he on about now, Hugo?

HUGO BOONE: Don't rush me. I'm trying to work it out.

PENRY CARTER: This place should have been burned about
 your heads when you refused to run up the Red Dragon
 flag last St. David's Day. Do you know you cretins are



only one-hundredth alive? (*He turns to MILO*). What was your last contact with poetry?

MILO (*bemused*): It was a long time ago. My toes came into it somehow. My mother was fingering them. It was about a pig and a market. It wasn't much of a story.

HUGO BOONE: Look, Carter, why don't you shut up and join our wrestling club?

PENRY CARTER: I'm here to try to salvage the working class mind, not export it for scrap. Don't you people see anything in society or industry you'd like to alter?

(*HUGO and the club members shape up for a song.*)

CHORUS: We were put through a kind of moral hoop
By a couple of boys from the Oxford Group.
They told us not to wound our neighbour
With talk or threat of withholding labour.
The perfect boss may be hard to seek
But for thirty, thirty-five, quid a week
We'll gladly turn the other cheek.

PENRY CARTER: Conformist clots, running-dogs of the English water-board.

HUGO BOONE: That settles it. Anybody who tries to wean us away from the Empire gets lashed to Chepstow bridge with the tug-o'-war rope.

Again we have tremendous charges from the lads and miraculous feints and evasions from PENRY. But this time the boys have gained in cunning and they are about to close in on PENRY when he delivers a brilliant shoulder charge to MILO that sends the giant spinning. He dashes out of the club. MILO and the rest stand at the door and watch him with their jaws audibly dropping. They are joined by URIAH REED.

URIAH REED: Just watch him run. He went up that lane like a shot goat. He's twice as fast as Lenny Adams. Do you realize that with him for our centre and the tug-o'-war team as our pack we could field a rugby team to beat the world?

SCENE V

Immense celebrations in the club. HUGO BOONE is holding up a paper. He reads from it to members.

HUGO BOONE: Listen. "Belmont's Iron Men Sensation of Rugby Year. Welsh Selectors Cannot Ignore Carter This Afternoon."

MEMBER: But I thought Carter was all against sport, all for thought, poetry and that stuff.

HUGO BOONE: It was Uriah Reed who did it. Penry was under the spell of that girl Bronwen Adams. A rabid nationalist. She practically had him sleeping with the Red Dragon and taking out his Post Office savings to blow up the Elan Valley water works. Then Uriah found that Bronwen is the granddaughter of old Lenny Adams, the great centre who humbled England in 1907. Reporters flocked around. Till then Bronwen had been ashamed of her granddad, hid him away as an illiterate old crumb. But now she sees the light. She urges Penry to take up the handling code and humble England.

MEMBER (*darting into the club*): Penry has been picked. Him and the entire Belmont pack are in.

CHORUS: So three cheers now for the Iron Men
Who'll bring us glory once again
At Twickenham, at Twickenham.
Hearts of steel and skulls of oak
Through them let modest Gwalia speak.



We may desert our ancient Muses
But let the Saxon count his bruises
At Twickenham, at Twickenham.

(*Enter the Iron Men and on their shoulders, PENRY and BRONWEN.*)

CHORUS: We pronounce with authentic ecstasy
The magnetic force of idiocy.
These idealists, they fume and foam
But captive now they come to Rome.

PENRY CARTER:

It was nice to wrestle briefly with the intellect's ifs and buts
But it's nicer to be cheered, and that Kafka was driving me nuts.

BRONWEN ADAMS:

It was nice to dream while reading of being intellect's Joan of Arc
But I've got full use of the parlour and it's warmer than the park.

THE IRON MEN:

Down with the earnest and the sad thoughts that sicken 'em
Here's to extrovert joy and glory at Twickenham.

FULL CHORUS:

And to Banion, Evans, Jones, O'Toole,
The boys who got rich with no help from school.

☆

Next Week:

"Test Side Story," by T. S. Watt

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Sleeper

ONE spring I came up to London with the intention of selling a batch of primitive gouache pictures that I had painted on shoebox lids while on holiday in Cornwall. My aunt and Mr. Ellis, the manager of the drapery shop where I worked, had tried to persuade me not to leave home, but I had explained to them that their provincial middle-brow attitudes were stifling my creative urge, and had departed recklessly on an early morning train, carrying a sleeping bag and twenty pictures bundled up in a gas cape. The pictures had been painted under the influence of Christopher Wood and all the people I encountered in the Bond Street galleries told me so to my face. Some of them even sniggered.

By ADAM BONNER

My first night in London was spent behind a bush in the Victoria Embankment Gardens. As I settled down in my sleeping bag, which was made of white cotton and glowed like a luminous cocoon in the dark, I congratulated myself on my plan for avoiding undue expenses. Then a gang of men started work under a railway bridge about fifty yards away from me. They were road-menders on the night shift, and I lay awake for hours, wincing and clenching my fists, while they hammered away with pneumatic drills, bawled "One, two, three, heave," and tossed paving stones about. They stopped once for a

tea break, but when Big Ben chimed midnight they started up again. Far above my head was the terrace of the National Liberal Club, and after a while I thought I could see pale faces leaning over the parapet and peering down at me. All night long I expected to crack under the strain. But soon after dawn the faces dissolved and the pneumatic drills ceased, and crawling out from behind the bush I hurried away for breakfast. I had to wait for three hours in a doorway in Villiers Street before a café opened.

Afterwards I haunted the art galleries for the second time, but most of the dealers refused to speak to me, and I was too tired to protest. In the street I wandered about with glazed eyes and



"My, you certainly got out of the wrong side of bed this morning."

my mouth hanging open. Occasionally I stopped men with furled umbrellas and asked them where I was, but they only glared at me. I was pleased when the sun went down, which meant I could go to Charing Cross and collect my bag from the cloakroom.

That night I decided to sleep in Hyde Park. I had heard it was a big secluded place. However, when I arrived there I found it was full of people. I kept bumping into them as I tramped along the paths. At first I thought they were all strolling through the park on their way home from the pictures. Then I noticed couples huddled on benches and standing under trees and heard men and women whispering and rustling in the shrubberies, and I realized that I was experiencing life in the raw. Hoping to scare them all away I began to stamp my feet as I walked. In my agitation I waved my arms about, and my bag slipped to the ground. As I bent to pick it up a woman stepped out of the shadows and spoke to me.

"That's nice, dear," she commented. "You've brought your bed with you." Glancing up at her I saw that she was old enough to be my aunt. "I happen to be looking for a place to sleep," I said. "Aren't we all," she replied indulgently.

Eluding her red-taloned fingers, which were clutching at my sleeve, I hastily moved on.

At last, floundering through a flower bed, I walked up a slope into a grove of trees. It looked like a safe spot, so I took off my shoes and wriggled into my bag. I closed my eyes with a sigh, and then opened them as a long thin man tripped over me.

"What you doing there, chum?" he asked.

"Sleeping," I said. "I'm a fresh air fiend."

My sarcasm failed to wither him.

"Funny place to pick, isn't it?" he said.

"Oh, I don't know," I said.

"Why don't you go to an hotel?" he suggested. When I didn't answer he reconsidered the suggestion. "What about a dosshouse?" he said. I remained silent, and he scratched his head.

"There's a landlady I know," he said. "I'll give you her address if you like." Tearing a page from a diary he rolled it, stooped down and tucked it behind my ear like a cigarette. "There



ROY DAVIS

you are," he said. "I don't like to see a bloke brought down to this. You go round and see Mrs. Moody in the morning. She'll do you a cheap bed and breakfast."

I thanked him and he went away.

After a moment I heard his voice again. He was talking to another man on the path below. "Sleeping with a white sheet wrapped round him," he said. "Didn't half give me a shock. I walked right into him. Thought he was a ghost."

"Well, let's take a look at him," the other man said in a slurred voice. "Maybe he'd like a drink."

I squirmed out of my bag, darted into the open and saw two figures stumbling towards me up the slope. One brandished a bottle and shouted "Wait a minute, Jack. We've got something for you." Frantically I dodged back into the trees, blundered through them and out the other side, trailing the bag after me.

I had crammed my shoes in my pockets, and as I ran over the grass in my stocking feet I could hear the two men whooping. I kept running until their voices faded, and then I came to a halt, with a taste like rusty tin in my mouth and a feeling that my throat had been cut with a razor.

By now the air was sultry, the sky overcast, and thunder rumbled. All I could see in the darkness was the grass at my feet. I spread out the bag once more, forced myself into it and dozed off for at least two minutes.

I woke to find an Alsatian dog dripping saliva on my face. Behind the dog stood a man in a peaked cap, holding the beast on a slack leash.

"Is it dangerous?" I asked him.

"Not unless I give the word," he said, and the dog growled, as though it had been given the word.

"I'll come quietly," I said. I wheezed as I spoke because the dog's forepaws were on my chest.

"What do you think you're doing?" the man asked.

I had expected him to ask me that question, and I had an answer ready for him.

"Sleeping?" he said. "Funny place to sleep isn't it?"

The conversation was going according to routine. Then I had a sudden inspiration. "I'm up for the big game, officer." I explained, assuming a northern accent.

His manner softened immediately, and the dog's fangs retreated as he tightened the leash. "In that case," he said, "I'll let you stay. Don't make a habit of it though."

I thought I had got rid of him, but he turned back with another question. "Which side do you support then?"

I was nonplussed for a second; I didn't even know the names of the teams. "May the best side win," I said vaguely.

"Manchester City, you mean?"

"My favourite team," I said fervently.

"All right then, chum," he said. "Sleep tight. And don't make a noise, or you'll get me into trouble."

He and the dog padded off into the darkness, and I relaxed.

A minute later it started to rain. There wasn't a waterproof cover on my bag, so I lay defenceless, baring my teeth at the sky while the rain oozed through the white cotton and soaked me

to the skin. When a pool had formed round my head I struggled up on to my feet and walked in erratic circles to keep warm. I didn't care who won the game, but I was still interested in painting. I wondered what Van Gogh would have done in my position, or Gauguin, or Modigliani, or even Annigoni.

At this point a white swan drifted towards me out of the night, and I realized that I had walked into the Serpentine. My first impulse was to wade farther out until the water closed over my head, but I imagined my aunt's humiliation when she read about me in the Sunday papers, so I abandoned the idea and headed back for the shore. A nervous twitch developed in my right cheek as I sought shelter. Eventually

I discovered a tree with a bench under it, and sitting down I draped my sleeping bag over my shoulders like a shawl and waited for morning.

At daybreak a policeman gave me a nudge and told me to move on. I walked straight out of the park to Charing Cross, where I recovered my pictures from the cloakroom attendant and retired to the waiting room with a railway timetable.

In the afternoon I travelled home. My aunt, who said it was nice to see me back again, told me that Mr. Ellis had been inquiring about me ever since I had left for London. I went along to see him the next day, and he said "Youth must have its fling" and offered me my old job back.

I've been working for him at the drapery shop for nearly five years now, and no one could have a more considerate employer. I still paint in my spare time. Last Sunday, for instance, I did a picture of the disused mill on the canal bank, with the sun setting behind it. Mr. Ellis was delighted when I showed him the picture. I'd got the detail and lighting perfectly, he said; the scene looked almost real; it was good enough to hang up in his office at the shop. As he often points out to me: "Painting is the finest hobby there is. It's the sort of thing you're still able to do when you're old."

City and Suburban

"... he said that followers of the Hunt might have difficulty in knowing where the land boundaries were. Seventy-five per cent of them were from London and did not know the difference between wheat and grass. That was why so much damage was done."—The Guardian

OH, a Man on a Horse
Is a godlike creature.
He reckons no rules
And he needs no teacher.
By a few great facts
His vision is bounded:
The fox was fashioned
For being hounded;
And, wheat or beet
Or fallow or clover,
Fields are there
For galloping over;

He who wires his land
Is a Communist;
So is the farmer
Who will insist
On trying to get
A living off it—
Why, the City's the place
For making a profit!
And, maize or leys
Or taters or clover,
Fields are there
For galloping over.

— PETER DICKINSON



Musical Seals

By ALEX ATKINSON

AS is well known, I do not normally take part in controversies about whether or not the Grey Seal (*Holichærus grypus*) cares to hear people singing "There's a wideness in God's mercy." However, in view of the recent stir in *The Times* (in the course of which we learned, among other things, of a strange week's holiday spent by Sir Donald Wolfit singing Hebridean songs and some of the better music-hall tunes to seals in the Western Scottish Highlands) I feel I should now release, for the advancement of scientific knowledge if for nothing else, some pertinent extracts from the log of the *Maisie Lumkin*, a small dark brown schooner in which I made my seal-worrying expedition to a remote part of the North

Atlantic in April 1937. From the correspondence in *The Times* it emerges that seals used to turn out to listen to the ships' bands of the Grand Fleet as it lay at anchor in Scapa Flow during the first world war. It further emerges that seals have shown a preference for sea shanties, settings of Shakespeare's songs, the works of Mozart, and nursery rhymes. The extracts from my log will show that these were comparatively insignificant discoveries. The whole business is far more mysterious than that.

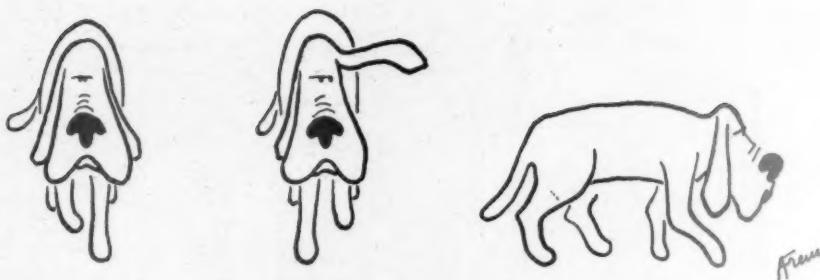
April 2.—Wind fresh. Principal tenor (A. Humbolt) complained of slight sore throat. Lifeboat drill at three bells, followed by a rehearsal of the first half of *The Dream of Gerontius* on the poop,

the strings being accommodated in a tarpaulin slung between the thwart-decks for reasons of space. An albatross suddenly falling dead at the second bassoon's feet the rehearsal was abandoned, as eight contraltos, obviously superstitious, claimed it was an omen. The ship's cook, an ignorant man, gave it as his opinion that the bird had been listening intently in the crow's-nest for a full ten minutes before it fell. He said it seemed "more surprised than anything."*

April 3.—Heavy swell. No seals sighted as yet. Madrigal singers set adrift in an open boat to render *Hail To The Nice Summer Weather* to a party of puffins on a small rock. Two drowned. Puffins restless but non-committal. (Memo.—Can puffins hear? Bring this up at Explorers' Club. It might explain a lot.)

April 9.—Hove to and tied up in lee of a medium-sized ice-floe (precise latitude and longitude sent in code to *National Geographic Magazine*, carbon copy to Armand and Michaela Denis). Assembled full orchestra on floe, and played *Land of Hope and Glory* to warm up the instruments. Piccolo jammed solid with ice, had to be discarded. Harpist kept muffing her arpeggios, but refused point blank to take off her fur gloves. Drainage outlet at base of tuba frozen tight, instrument seized up after six bars. Lit a small fire to thaw out the French horns. Several violin strings snapped on account of contraction. Nobody had an A. Eventually all happy; and tackled the first item, Brahms' *Academic Festival Overture*. Twenty-five grey seals came slithering round the corner almost at once and, having formed a circle, sat and swayed in time to the music. One appeared to be smoking a pipe, but this may have been a trick of the light. At the end of the piece all the seals applauded generously—except one, which had fallen fast asleep. (Query—are some seals bored by Brahms? Question of age, perhaps? Or familiarity?) Next Mr. Humbolt sang an aria from *Il Trovatore*. The seals turned away rather pointedly, and balanced things on their snouts,† making grunting noises. After an interval, during which all hands returned to the

* This was later born out by a Mrs. Rigley, a stowaway. "It appeared to be thinking," she said. That would be at about tea-time.
† Bits of flotsam, chiefly.



schooner for hot cocoa, I assembled the company and we gave a performance of *Gerontius* in our overcoats. Effect was curious. Seals arrived from all directions. Manx shearwaters swooped down and perched on the shoulders of the string section, where they beat time with their beaks. There was a cry of "Thar she blows!" from the 'cellos, and sure enough a sperm whale was approaching the floe from E.N.E. at about four knots. It came alongside with a crunch, breathing hard, and some of the older seals turned and said "Ssh!" quietly but distinctly, waving the programmes which we had issued. Whale stayed until the end, appeared disconsolate when it found there was to be no encore. Sea slight, wind moderate.

April 15.—*Mal-de-mer* being rife among the sopranos, I took the opportunity to summarize some of our findings to date. They are as follows.

Love-Hate Song

'TIS Autumn time—two business men

Are eating on the train,
Discussing how they'll buy and then
Adroitly sell again.

It is not in me to abhor
The way they eat their fill,
Throw down their napkins on the
floor,

Complain of how the taxes soar,
And fold away the bill.

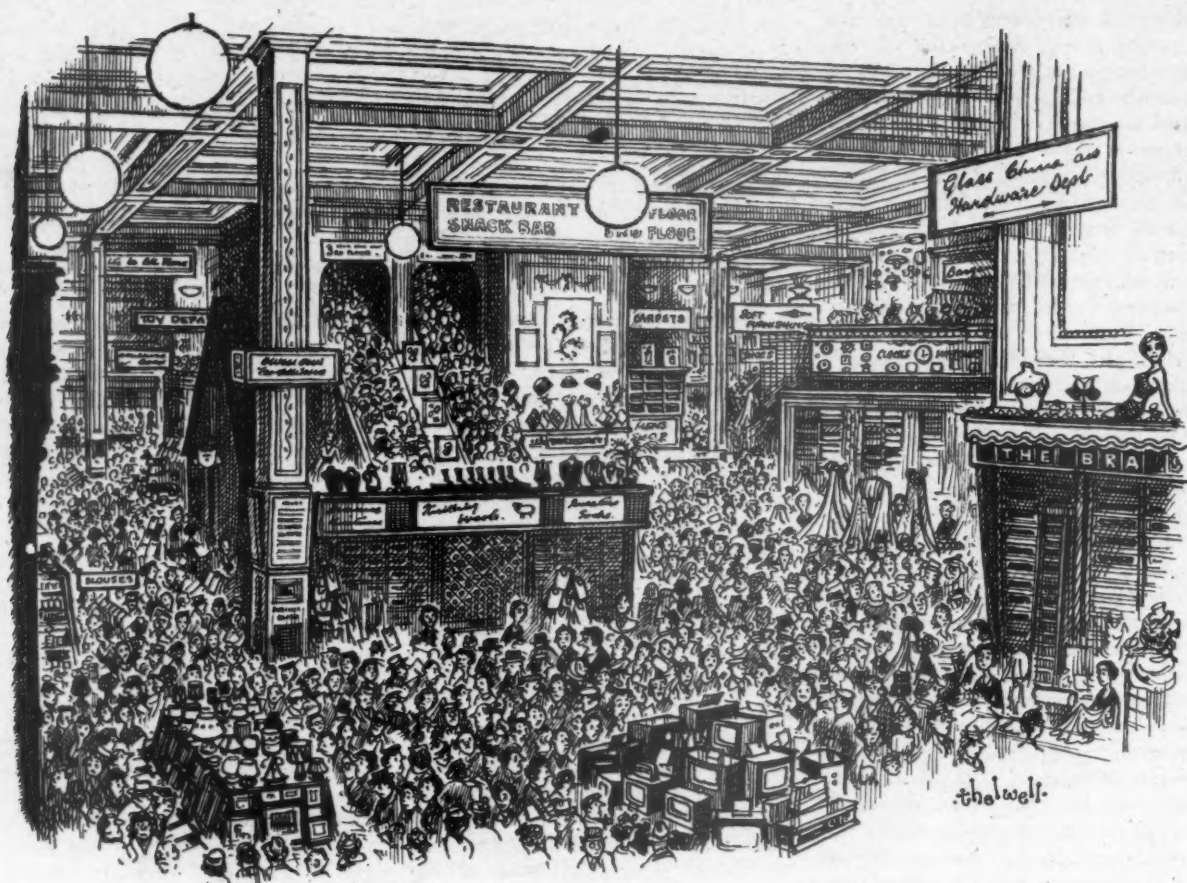
I do not loathe the muted tones
Which instinct bids them use
To guard a hint of rumoured loans
From those in nearby pews;
Nor yet the backward-leaning yell
Of quick, financial mirth
Which racks them as they plan to sell
Some distant, dismal, drying well
For twice what it is worth.

They treat of Oils and Mines and Teas,
Of Trust and Bond and Bank,
Of Wolfram, Wool, Utilities,
Of Dollar, Pound and Franc.

Their hands and shirts are soft and
white,
Their hearts as hard as nuts,
And yet I know it isn't right
To loose my private dynamite,
I cannot hate their guts.

They do not know, and could not care,
That as they merge and float,
A nearby poet tears his hair
And tears up what he wrote.
I'd meant to write of nature's knell
'Neath Autumn's tinted kiss . . .
How can I wish them both in hell?
It's obviously just as well
The thing's come out like this.

— J. B. BOOTHROYD



"I'm getting mine early—you know what it'll be like at Christmas."

Wine in Season

*Burston Connaught, the distinguished vintner, in an exclusive interview with
BERNARD HOLLOWOOD, discusses some of the newest ideas in wining and dining*

H: I should like to be in the swim and entertain with wine, but I have no cellar and cannot afford to have one dug because my house is on an outcrop of bone-hard Silurian schist. How do I conquer the resultant inferiority complex?

C: I'm glad you asked that. Cellars are not necessary. In fact most wines behave better at or just above ground level. After all that's where the grapes grow, isn't it? Wine doesn't really like the higher atmospheric pressures encountered in deer cellars and vaults.

So don't worry. Wine can be kept anywhere. I have kept it quite successfully on the upper edges of volumes of the *Britannica*, in a slightly tilted dog kennel, and cradled in the dents of trilby hats on a shelf in the clothes cupboard. So you see!

H: Is it true that guests are apt to feel slighted if you don't offer them the most expensive wine, which I understand is champagne?

C: No. It is quite true that *some* people prefer bubbly wines to still wines, just as some people, odd though

it may seem, prefer bottled to draught beers. Keats swooned over a beaker full of the warm south, with beaded bubbles winking at the brim, and purple-stained mouth, which sounds to me rather like a carbonated Algerian. A vile concoction. If your friends are only happy with a sparkling wine your best plan is to serve a very cheap *ordinaire* with a spoonful of health salts.

H: I am told that it is correct for the host to pour a little wine into his own glass before serving his guests. Is this absolutely necessary? The practice

makes me feel such a *fool* that I always get a fit of the giggles and put my wife in a flaming temper.

C: I'm glad you mentioned that. In theory the host should taste the wine first to prove that it hasn't been poisoned, but it is wiser, and kinder to your wife's cooking, not to remind the guests that there is such a thing as death by misadventure. If the wine has been incorrectly opened there may be a little cork or wax in the first glass, and obviously you as host should be the one to suffer. The foreign body can be pushed to one corner of the mouth during the soup and extracted, with or without a small bone, during the fish. If you still feel unsure of yourself why not pour the first drop of wine into pussy's saucer? This move always provides the company with an amusing talking point.

H: Wine experts seem to know wines by their years. Is there any way of overcoming the embarrassment caused by my total ignorance of such matters?

C: A good question. Your problem only arises of course when you are dining out: at home it is the work of a moment to soak off the label printed with the vintage year or to decant the wine. When dining out your best plan is to ask your friends right out whether or not they *like* a 1956 Fleurie. If they say yes, as they will, you are safe. But it is not difficult, really, to remember the good years. For example: 1955 was the year that Margaret Varner of Boston won the U.S. Women's Singles Badminton Championship; 1952 was when Bobby Locke won the Open at Royal Lytham St. Anne's; 1945 was when Uruguay joined the United Nations Organization. And so on and so forth. Anyway that's my method. And it works. One advantage is that you don't have to remember *anything* at all about poor years—a fact that clears the head of an astonishing amount of cant.

H: Another thing that foxes me is whether to drink white or red wine with fish. I'm told that one should drink red only when there's an R in the month. Is that right?

C: Drink just what you like. Most people drink white wine with white fish, red with red fish, but you have to please your own palate. Remember that in Lapland they eat nothing but fish and fish products, so that they would

be permanently deprived of red wine if they allowed themselves to become the slaves of habit and fashion. I have to admit that I prefer white with fish. With tinned salmon I prefer a rosé, and with scampi a little theatrical yellowish wine from the Ruhr.

H: How about oysters?

C: Guinness or Chablis, I suppose. But I must remind you that Marshal Ney always drank tea with his oysters—"a pot of Ceylon brewed for two minutes dead." Once again I can only advise you against rigidity and unthinking orthodoxy.

H: One last question. I'm always puzzled to know how long wine should be held in the mouth. Obviously it should not be gulped at once, but all this business of swilling it round the mouth seems terribly impolite to me. Am I right?

C: I'm glad you raised this point.

Wine is supposed to encourage conversation and clearly it can't do that if people are swilling it round and round their mouths every few seconds. Everything within reason. If you're drinking a hock and keep the stuff in your mouth more than, say, ten seconds, your host will begin to be anxious about its temperature and may have to admit that the bottle was in the fridge too long. If it's a claret the oral delay will suggest that the bottle was submitted to room temperature only as an afterthought. Wine should be passed round the mouth to contact as many taste buds as possible, but there is no need to *chew*. I find that five seconds is ample for most wines. If you have a sweep second-hand on your watch and the watch is turned to face you from the inside of the wrist the necessary timing need not be in any way demonstrative or awkward.

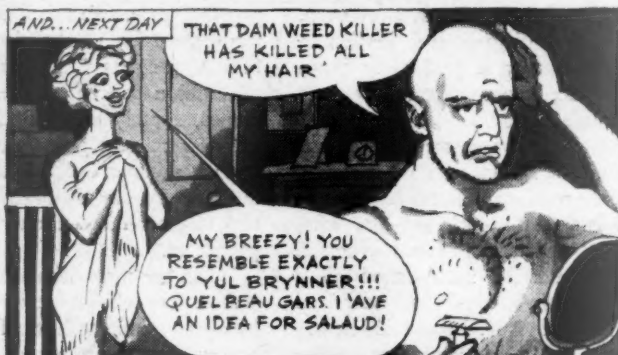
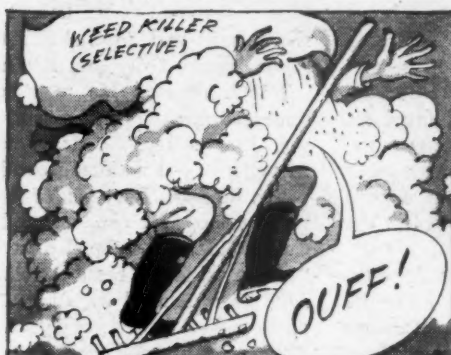


"Take no notice, Sir John—she's probably one of the Friends of the Tate Gallery."

SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT STRIPS



SALAUD WAS FURIOUS . . .



The Birth of a Baton

CHARLES REID writes of a career which began sixty years ago next month and has the world by the ear still

FOR his installation as Mayor, Joseph, a small, pusillanimous person with greying head and drooping moustaches, ordered from Edes, robemakers to the Queen, a gilt-looped hat and a crimson silk surtout edged with sable fur; and from Mr. Forsyth, its Manchester agent, the entire Hallé Orchestra, nothing over-looked, piccolo, tuning fork, grubby white ties, Hans Richter, greasy tails, tambourine, everything, to play Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Wagner and Berlioz in a celebratory way at St. Helens Town Hall, Lancs., before eight hundred and fifty yawning guests.

Mr. Richter, it was agreed, was just the job. Mr. Richter went zeussing around Europe among bended knees in shovel beard, billycock hat and what looked like a stationmaster's overcoat, trailing clouds of moth-balled glory from Bayreuth, where he had been well in with the Wagners. People said he was the greatest living conductor. The same people at other times, or in the same breath, said there were two other greatest living conductors. With Mr. Richter as its conductor the Mayor's Concert could not fail to make almost as great an impression as the Mayor's Hat.

But it was not to be. Mr. Richter went off to conduct in Vienna.

The news that he couldn't or wouldn't conduct the Mayor's Concert reached Joseph at a square stucco mansion called Ewanville, where he lived in some grandeur. Ewanville had brocaded walls, carpets in which you sank up to the knees, children of all sorts and sizes, a chug-chugging machine that made electricity in the stableyard, numberless grand pianos, including one caparisoned in burgundy velvet like a pageant horse, two milch cows, a braying orchestrion with gilded pipes and brazen trumpets which fed on perforated rolls, a vine that grew prize-winning grapes, a pony called Polly, fireplaces full of pink and yellow pampas grass, and a handyman called Jones who spent most of the day sliding about on one foot in the billiards room to polish the parquetry.

When the news came about Richter, Joseph took off his new hat sadly (he had been admiring himself in it before a long mirror surmounted by a gilded cherub) and looked inside it as if expecting to find an answer there. Presently bestirring himself, he sent messages out to every second greatest living conductor in the land. (There were two score of these.) Every second greatest living conductor was pre-booked for December 6, 1899.

It was at this point that Tom spoke up, elder son and second child of Joseph, newly down from Wadham. "If Richter can't conduct," said Tom, "I will."

The entire family laughed itself into stitches at the mere idea. All except Joseph, that is.

"Why shouldn't I conduct?" Tom persisted. "I know all the music by heart. And I've conducted before." [True. A month earlier he had taken a mixed am. and prof. band through Mendelssohn, Grieg and Rossini.]

Joseph fingered his moustache for some seconds. Then he said, "Well, yes, have a try." Mr. Forsyth of Manchester was notified accordingly.

Mr. Risegari, first fiddle of the Hallé, who had hoped to conduct the Mayor's Concert himself, scowled dissentiently. "If you think the Hallé is going to let itself be conducted by a green boy of nineteen——"

"Twenty-one and seven months to be exact."

"—you are mistaken."

"Well then, damn you," interposed Joseph, "stay away. I'll go to London and hire another orchestra."

Mr. Risegari, defeated, retired to a khaki bell tent on the banks of the Irwell and stared at its iridescent waters. The rest of the Hallé came to heel. For their afternoon rehearsal under Tom, Joseph installed a bar at the town hall. The second bassoon got drunk. Tom's soprano, Miss Blauvelt, down on the programme for arias from *Roméo et Juliette* and *I Vespri Siciliani*, said she was ill and wouldn't be able to sing. Joseph did the customary thing in such circumstances. He looked deep into Miss Blauvelt's eyes and told her she had never felt better in her life. That cured Miss Blauvelt. The second bassoon put his head under a tap. That cured him.

These were not the only preparations. In the square outside the town hall men on mobile towers rigged arc lamps so that when night came the eight hundred and fifty should neither grope



nor stumble. Drayloads of chrysanthemums and exotic ferns were brought in from municipal hothouses and those of Ewanville.

All in all the Mayor's Concert was a triumph for the Mayor, the Mayor's Hat and the Mayor's son. At the end the tone-deaf gathered round a local Moses Figure, Elliott by name, conductor of the St. Helens Choral Society, and asked how Tom had done. What were they to think?

Elliott pondered a while, making judicious munching motions with his mouth, as Moses Figures will. Then he pronounced. Remarkable. Bit of exaggeration here. Bit of over-enthusiasm there. But clever conducting. Very clever. What life, what energy! And what a memory! An untried boy conducting Beethoven's Fifth without music in front of him!

Beneath an imported palm tree Tom was questioned by a man in felt snow boots and cycling clips who scribbled Tom's answers in a notebook.

"May I ask why you didn't take any musical honours while at Oxford?"

"I was going to take a musical degree last year, but I wasn't well at the time. I'm in no hurry. Nothing very wonderful about a degree."

"And now you have found how well you like conducting, do you intend to stick to it?"

"I hardly know yet." [At that time, the fact is, Tom thought of going in for diplomacy and/or becoming Prime Minister.]

In Manchester certain malcontents (of whom Mr. Risehari is said to have been one) spread a story that Tom had jeopardized Beethoven's Fifth by starting it on the wrong beat—an impossible feat when one looks into the matter technically.

Meantime *The St. Helens Newspaper and Advertiser* wrote a shrewd thing. Tom's surname, it said, might some day be as well-known in music as it was already in another capacity. For "another capacity" read "pills." The surname was Beecham, of course.

☆

"Macmillan's reshuffle has not touched the three chief persons in the old firm . . . Selwyn Lloyd . . . Samuel Butler, who also becomes Chairman of the Conservative party . . . and Heathcoat Amory."

Giornale del Mattino

You mean Samuel Butler, R.A.?

Man in Apron

by *LARRY*



STOCKING A STOCKING ?

YOU will remember from childhood Christmases the thrill of sheer weight in a present. The solid worth of something chunky rang the bell every time. This Christmas, let us send your most discriminating friend about eighteen lb. of PUNCH. It will be divided into fifty-two weekly packages for convenience (sorry, fifty-three with the Almanack), but will impress nevertheless, not least because PUNCH is the lightest thing going for its weight. We send your greetings, too, adroitly timed. Just send us the name and address of the lucky recipient. Subscriptions: Great Britain and Eire £2 16s.; Canada (by Canadian Magazine Post) £2 10s. (\$7.25); Elsewhere Overseas £3 (U.S.A. \$9.00). Write to: Department ED., PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4. U.S.A. and Canadian readers may remit by cheques on their own banks. Other overseas readers should consult their bankers or remit by postal money order.

Concluding

A Distracting Episode

3. The Fuss Dies Down

By R. G. G. PRICE



I HAD imagined that once we had given up one of our few free evenings to attend a party and receive the cheque for £215,735 we had won in a Football Pool we should be left alone to continue preparing for the Dramatic Society's performance, which was getting terrifyingly near. This was not to be.

We received a number of letters, each of which had to be opened and read, so that we seriously considered making breakfast earlier to deal with our post. Elfrida makes delicious agrimony kedgeree and one is always in good appetite and ready for table; but it is annoying to have to alter one's timetable under pressure from people one does not know.

Some of the letters were merely printed circulars puffing this good cause and that. Others contained general reflections on political and economic matters, often couched in rather gamey diction. One came from a man who claimed to be Parnell and to be incarcerated at Folkestone by agents of British Imperialism. I wrote back pointing out that the signature of the Irish Treaty in 1922 had cut the ground from under his feet; but Hroswitha's school psychologist, when informed, said the letter smacked suspiciously of a deprived childhood.

There were also several letters for Hroswitha from mothers who said their little boys would like to play with her. I had to put my foot down about this. Hroswitha is big for her age and a rough player. There is no sadism in the child. It is just over-excitement combined with some kind of knack with bones. Later on we mean to channel it into constructive directions.

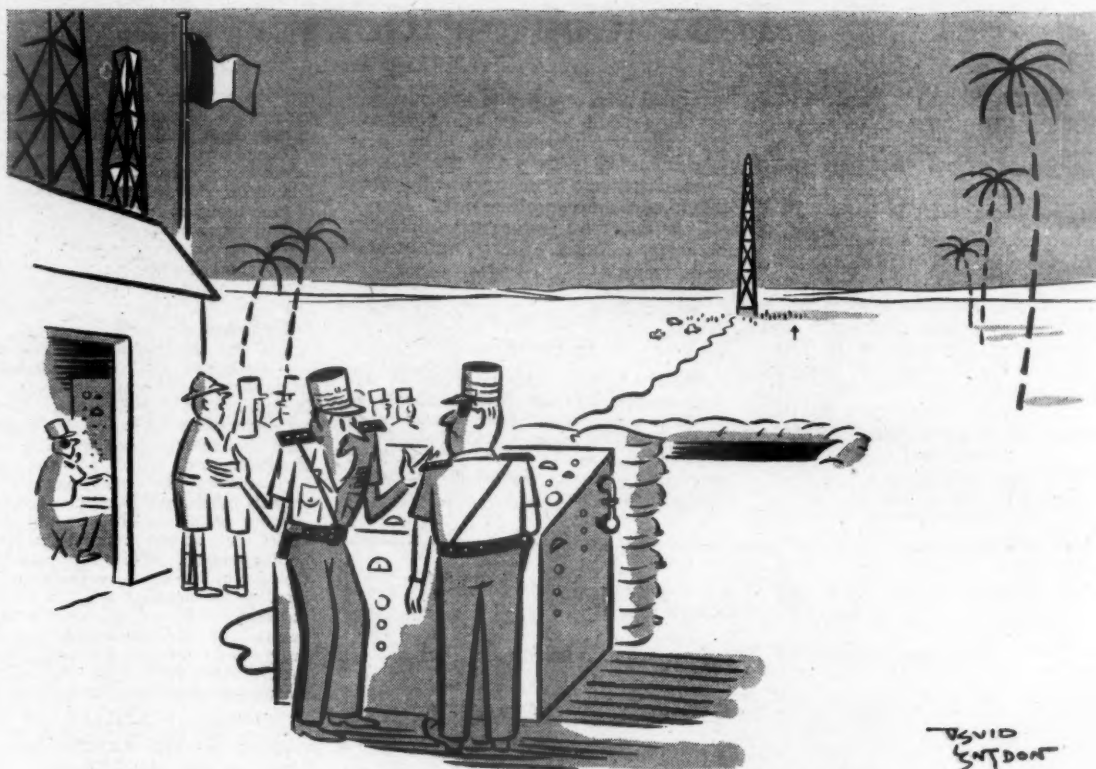
One Saturday afternoon, while our friend and neighbour Sidney Jackson was helping me to clean up last year's sticks of greasepaint ready for the dress rehearsal, a rather over-dressed young

man called and invited me to take a drive with him. He was a stranger to me and I cannot say I was sorry. He had an enormous pallid car and seemed to be dressed in accoutrements rather than clothes. I thought for a moment he might be a new member of the Dramatic Society hoping to get a part at short notice by thrusting civilities at members of the committee. Then Hroswitha said "There are always people selling things at this door. Yesterday it was onions and to-day it is cars."

The salesman made some lame remark about there being no obligation to buy and being delighted just to give me the pleasure of a spin. Sidney Jackson, who is a compulsive acceptor of samples, nudged me and looked so anxious for the treat that I called Elfrida from her crab-apple bottling and we all got in.

The salesman began to tell us about the car's technical prowess, but I hushed him and asked that our drive should include MacKendrew Park, where I wanted to show Hroswitha the aviary. He was silent for a few yards and then asked me what my plans were. Thinking of course, that he was referring to the show, I said that I should be prompting and hoped there were not going to be too many late cuts. Here Hroswitha, who does cricket at school, made some kind of sporting pun. Meanwhile Sidney Jackson had found a built-in tape recorder and was recording an elaborate and confusing route from Brentford to Newcastle via Wrexham that, I imagine, he hoped might be accidentally switched on sometime.

The salesman began demonstrating the horns, the radio, the roof, which folded back mechanically, and various other distractions; however, we were passing the aviary and I was much too busy with Hroswitha's first sight of an avocet to bother with him. When he returned us to our home the tone in



"Somehow, even 'Cinq, quatre, trois, deux, un . . .' doesn't sound right."

which we all thanked him for the ride showed him that he would be wasting his time to call again.

Even odder was the visit we had from a yacht salesman. There is no water within miles of us and in any case when we have a continental holiday we want to get at the sights as quickly as possible. I imagine that the cross-Channel steamers are faster than yachts. Elfrida made him a mock venison pasty, civilly enough, and Hroswitha tried to entertain him with some rolls on the drums. I was really too busy checking the crêpe hair to take much notice of him. My preoccupation did not save me from his importunities.

"This will mean a great change in your way of life," he began, like Old Moore. "To keep up your new position you will be wanting a number of things. Some of them are optional, but a yacht is a must."

"Parse 'must'," Hroswitha quipped, and I felt proud of her. She has not been brought up to let the pageant of life flow by without questioning it.

The salesman ignored her, always bad

tactics with the child, and continued, "You will now be associating with people to whom the first essential of gracious living is a comfortable, deep-sea, luxury cabin cruiser, chef-carrying, of course."

"Are these people interested in Old English Cookery?" I asked. "If not they have nothing for my wife and, I tell you frankly, we shall not be seeing much of them."

He continued to speak of dancing under the Southern Cross, and of sleek men and beautiful women strolling on deck and looking across the phosphorescent waves; but there is a limit to the time you can give to other people's conversation, and when Sidney Jackson called round to discuss a change in the lighting I had to bring the interview to a firm close.

In the bustle of getting ready for the dress rehearsal I quite forgot that I still had the cheque from the Pools people lying about somewhere. I usually put any savings into a Building Society as the money is safe there and it is no trouble to do, so the next time I had a

moment I paid the cheque over to them.

In time the mail contracted to its old size and we were left in peace by vendors of machinery. Attempts to build up boy-and-girl friendships with Hroswitha also languished. It had all been a serious addition to my worries at a time that is always a strain for everybody who has the welfare of the Dramatic Society at heart. However, Elfrida kept my nerves from becoming too taut with her scrumptious poppy-seed marchpane. And *Look Back in Anger* was a triumph.

LITTLE BRIEF AUTHORITY

Next week we begin a new series of articles aimed against those who, "dressed in a little brief authority," throw their weight about to the detriment of their fellows.

To start, C. H. ROLPH writes about the police and the public. Future contributors will include Sir Compton Mackenzie, Christopher Brasher, Raymond Postgate, Sir Miles Thomas, Sir Gordon Russell, Richard Findlater, Richard Gordon.

Toby Competitions

No. 89—Beauty's Bard

A POET LAUREATE, let us assume, has been commissioned to write occasional verse saluting Miss World (she can be of any nationality). Specimens, please: limit 14 lines.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, December 4, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 89, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 86

(Freedom)

Extracts from the Queen's Speech on the assumption that a Liberal Govern-

ment had been returned to power mostly ran along the lines of electoral reform and proportional representation. The many who intended to drop the alteration in enfranchisement were apparently confident of future elections and did not suggest that the Liberal Party thinks it a necessary measure. The winning entry came from:

C. L. LYALL,
5 WESTON ROAD,
PETERSFIELD, HANTS.

Apart from the wide measures of devolution to be made freely available to Scotland and Wales, virtually amounting to Home Rule, the Government will also afford wide scope to smaller regional units. It is proposed that Canvey Island, Egdon Heath, Rannoch Moor and the Cyffyllog Valley, to

mention only four areas with uniquely vital cultural traditions, should be encouraged to manage their affairs with the minimum of guidance from Whitehall. It is confidently hoped thereby that the rich heritage of local arts and crafts, with the revived production of such things as fretwork pipe-holders, cod cutlets, parsnip wine, and tartan novelties, will bring renewed prosperity not only to the regions in question but also to the nation.

Runners-up:

The arts will be fostered. Proposals will be put before you for facilitating a less restrained use of certain Anglo-Saxon terms in books, plays and the press. No form of self-expression, including premature and horizontal hirsute facial growths, prolonged osculation with erotic embraces in public performances, the emulation of distressed animals by singers of popular songs, or the wearing of stiletto heels with jeans and duffel coats at concerts and the opera, will be discouraged. While deploring the use of violence in attempts to take others' belongings, my Government will not overlook the unfortunate effects upon certain independent natures of old-established notions that everyone should work for his living and pay for his misdeeds.—J. H. Polfrey, *Fircroft, Broadwater Rise, Guildford*

My ministers will pursue policies of previous Liberal Administrations. As Gladstone with Arabi Pasha, so Grimond with Nasser; in defence of economic interests we will occupy Egypt, and restore the statue of General Gordon to Khartoum. Traditional friendship with Russia will be strengthened—so will our defences against the German menace. This will require a temporary doubling of income tax and beer duties. Home Rule will be granted to Ulster and the Isle of Man. To avoid weak government, proposals for proportional representation will be deferred indefinitely.—S. L. Short, 49 Alva Way, Carpenders Park, Watford, Herts.

This Parliament will aim at avoiding the pitfalls of State Control on the one hand and of unbridled Capitalism on the other. State ventures that have failed will be restored to modified forms of Private Enterprise.

A Fourth Reform Bill will be introduced, with the aim of ensuring that all votes will count equally in a General Election. There will be a study of methods of compensating ordinary citizens who are seriously inconvenienced by bus strikes and other work stoppages.—J. P. Pinel, 67 Horn Park Lane, Lee, S.E.12

My Ministers have no legislation to place before you at present. They regret that, in view of their unexpected election to office, they will have to crave the indulgence of my Lords and faithful Commons, in asking for time to devise some laws to pass. However, they have determined that as the present electoral system has placed them in office, they see no need for any form of Proportional Representation, which would annihilate their present comfortable majority. A bill will be placed before you shortly to provide for the erection of a Bonham-Carter monument . . . —E. O. Parrott, 47 Daver Court, Chelsea Manor Street, S.W.3

THEN AS NOW

(With best wishes to Sir Winston on his 85th birthday)

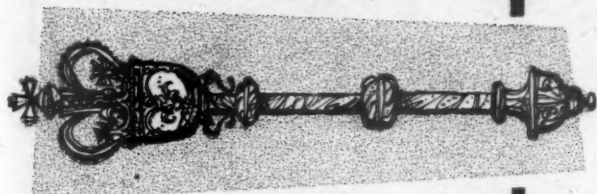


A CHOICE OF CHARACTERS

Our One and Only Winston. "Let's see, now; shall I go as Demosthenes, d'Artagnan, Dan O'Connell-Leno, or merely the usual Daniel in the lion's den? The last, I think, and, for all I care, let 'em choose their own den."

Jan. 31 1912

Essence



of Parliament

W. S. Morrison,
Lord Dunrossil



Herbert Morrison,
Lord Morrison

LORDS' week on the whole, and most that happened in the Commons was no more than a spill-over from the Lords. To begin with there were the Morrisons. What-

ever future may have been foreseen for the House of Lords, no one had ever predicted that it would turn into a Morrison shelter. Yet here on Tuesday was the Lord of Lambeth, armed with a broad grin and a lady introducer, and on Wednesday the ex-Speaker. At the very moment of his introduction into the Lords Lord Dunrossil was weathering a considerable storm *in absentia* in the Commons. It is hard to see very much sense in the contention that an ex-Speaker ought never to take any other job for the rest of his life. Adding-ton, after he had been Speaker, became Prime Minister, though no Member of the present House seemed erudite enough to remember as much. As for money, no one challenged though equally no one seemed to be acquainted with the figures—that Governor-Generals are always out of pocket on their terms of office. What then was the fuss about? The only solid reason for fuss was that expressed by Mr. Martin Lindsay, who said that there is too large a gap between the treatment of the band-wagon boys, who are passed on from job to job, public or private, and the poor old pensionless hacks, hanging on to their seats as the one means of livelihood. But it was a little disturbing to find that one hundred and fifty-five Members were ready to

vote against the ex-Speaker. The Speakership is the one office left at Westminster that inspires respect, and if respect for the Speakership goes the place is finished.

The other Lords-and-Commons row was a much better and healthier business—the battle of Piccadilly. The admirable Lord Conesford, the unflagging foe of all vulgarity and ugliness, started off the denunciation of that “unspeakable building.” Lord Esher and Lord Salisbury rallied to his support in the Lords. At the same time in another place Mr. Kenneth Robinson, another of vulgarity’s enemies, was complaining of “this vulgar and unimaginative proposal.” There his supporting phalanx was Mr. Gresham Cooke, Mr. Grimond and Mr. Aneurin Bevan. Truly a curiously assorted Seven to march out against Thebes; and almost more curious was it that the task of defending Thebes should have fallen to Lord Waldegrave, who is no natural Boeotian and who gave very much the impression that he would sooner have been on the giving than on the receiving end in this particular bombardment.

It passes the wit of man why Mr. Butler did not allow a free vote at any rate on the second reading of the Betting Bill. He would have won anyway, and the admirers of his subtlety would have thought that Mr. Butler would have been the first person to seize an occasion when it would have cost him nothing to make a

concession. As it is, he has aroused great suspicion that all his talk about wanting to give greater opportunities to back-bench Members was not more “all my eye and Betty Martin Redmayne.” The funniest thing in the debate by far was when Mr. Chuter Ede upset his voluminous notes in a cascade on the devoted head of Liberal Mr. Wade, seated beneath him. Several of Mr. Ede’s verbal jokes were funny—though none of them nearly as funny as this—but Mr. Ede exacted the reasonable privilege of old age that when he makes a good joke he should be allowed to make it twice over. Whatever the rights or wrongs of betting, the only way to make a lively speech about it is to enjoy it. The many weary arguments whether betting could be more properly called a sin or a folly were soon swept away by Mr. Mellish, who, frankly confessing that he enjoyed both betting and the pageantry of a racecourse, made undoubtedly the speech of the debate. It was the same good principle that you make the best speech if you are talking about something that you enjoy that caused Mr. Proudfoot, the newly-elected Member for Cleveland, to score a little triumph in his maiden speech in the horticultural debate on Thursday. Most Members are not madly thrilled by tomatoes, though Major Legge-Bourke thinks that “all hell will be let loose” about them; but Mr. Proudfoot loves packing and said so with pleasant gusto.

The other debate of the week was the debate about Constable Eastmond. It was a difficult subject to handle with restraint. The House must be the guardian of individual liberty or it is nothing. On the other hand it does not want to make the work of the police impossible by unnecessarily harrying them, and the extent of the Home Secretary’s responsibility is limited. But on the whole the subject was treated sensibly and moderately, and it was perhaps the House’s best performance yet. The crack of the debate was the Attorney-General’s assertion that “there is no independent witness of what led to Mr. Garratt being in the hedge.” Only a very great humorist could have contrived to look surprised when that crack was greeted with the loudest of laughter.

— PERCY SOMERSET

I WAS lying on the Khelin carpet in my office, feeling terrible, when Isabel telephoned to ask how many years I had spent at the Sorbonne and how many months I was pregnant. She was leaving for the South of France and needed French-speaking company, as her editor wanted an article on Françoise Sagan, currently living a life of barefoot luxury in St. Tropez and reputedly throwing bottles at any journalist who attempted an interview.

So with a book on painless childbirth tucked under one arm and a case of vitamin pills under the other I left to join Isabel with a growing craving for a *vraie bouillabaisse*.

Isabel hadn't told me that, because her editor also wanted an article on economy travel, we were going on a bus. We got to Nice for seven guineas each in the slowest coach in the world, driven by two Belgian law students on vacation. Isabel, with notions of wayside comfort conditioned by her evacuee experiences, spent the journey feeding me nourishing, unappetizing grey slices of her patent emergency-sandwich—a loaf of bread stuffed with steak—which had been pressed for twenty-four hours in a polythene bag underneath her television set.

Upon arrival at St. Tropez Isabel sternly said I needed a good night's sleep and left me doing her unpacking while she visited the smartest local night-club in pursuit, she said, of copy. I next saw her at three in the morning when she woke me to report that Sacha Distel said that Sagan is to be seen daily, like everyone else, on the beach. Distel was no great friend of hers but he kindly tore two pages out of his morocco-bound address book and presented them to Isabel, saying that some of these people must know her well. The next day I was parked under a sunshade to decipher Distel's writing while Isabel went off in a shocking-pink bikini to water-ski. Shocking-pink all over, she spent a gloomy night dabbing herself with sunburn lotion and scheming. She had several leads to her story, including the owner of the Crazy Horse Saloon, who said that Sagan danced nightly in a jazz cellar called the Eskimo, to which he would be pleased to accompany Isabel. In due course we appeared at the Eskimo where we just missed Sagan

FOR
WOMEN



but were introduced to Bernard Buffet, who said, such a shame, I'm leaving to-morrow or I could have arranged it. She lived, he told us, on top of a fairly inaccessible inland mountain and an introduction was essential as Sagan hates journalists, has refused interviews for three years, never speaks to strangers

Cherchez La Sagan

By SHIRLEY CONRAN

and doesn't answer the telephone. At the foot of the inland mountain was an expensive restaurant, to which a Belgian boot-manufacturer took Isabel the following evening and from whence she returned furious at five in the morning, on foot, not in his white Mercedes, and with no progress to report.

I spent the next few days on the beach which was vigilantly guarded by helicopter police patrols, ever alert to chase illicit nudists back into their clothes, while Isabel pursued Sagan's friends and interviewed celebrities with whose names she could placate her editor. Yves Montand knew Sagan but had no writing equipment on his speedboat; the Minister of the Interior thought his daughter-in-law was acquainted but was proven wrong; a Mr. Onassis thought Isabel was Martine Carole; the German industrialists simply wanted her on their yacht. I suggested that while we were leaving no stone unturned we should try simply knocking on her door. "Inutable," said Isabel, who had started to talk like a ticker tape. "Don't forget Suna Portman's coming to breakfast. Why don't you know that spectacled man who was telephoning Zizi? Must be Jeanmaire. Do I have to do everything?"

That afternoon I was introduced to Sagan's brother-in-law but I couldn't

tell Isabel because she had borrowed a horse from a bitter poet called Lulu and was riding to Sagan's mountain retreat. She returned hot, furious and frustrated, already aware of my news. Sagan had left that day for Paris with dog and manuscript.

We arrived in Paris by the evening plane on the hottest night since 1934, which we spent making plans and eating delicatessen under the shower. With daylight we discovered that everybody had left Paris for the French National Holiday, and when, after a day spent fruitlessly telephoning all our contacts the hotel's ancient switchboard operator had a stroke, we thought that we too had better leave for the country. We spent the next three days in an elegant *Maison et Jardin* millhouse, guests of a rich young marquis who had a passion for mathematics, model aeroplanes and, I suspect, Isabel. Rothschilds and Rockefellers abounded like lilies in the millpond, but nobody knew Sagan. Our host, Marcus, took us to tea at the château of a lady amateur parachutist who has a literary salon in Paris. She said Sagan was in Normandy, so the next day Isabel left me eating strawberries in the rose garden while Marcus flew her in his tiny two-seater plane to Sagan's manor house. She had already left for Paris. Isabel returned to the mill with earache and a neurotic twitch. Like the reporter in a B film she grimly told me that she had never yet failed to get her story, and so we left once more for Paris in the white Jaguar of a penicillin heiress.

When we arrived we found Paris was splitting with tourists and were lucky to get a room in that seedy Left Bank joke, the Hotel de Coventry, where everybody goes when they are broke, from Juliette Greco to Colin Wilson. Depressed and frustrated because the switchboard operator was drunk and we

could therefore telephone nobody, we left to join the mobs on the Left Bank, who were celebrating the Fall of the Bastille by singing, dancing and overturning little cars to *le hot jazz* of student bands.

In the middle of the night the telephone barked. Able by now to handle this instrument in my sleep, I hissed "*On dort*" and slammed the receiver back. "It was Sagan's brother-in-law on the telephone," Isabel coldly told me when a bunch of roses and a letter arrived with our breakfast tray. "Now he's gone back to the Côte d'Azur but he's sent this letter of introduction to Sagan's publishers."

We rushed into our clothes and tore off to the publishers, where we presented ourselves to the publicity director. She, poor woman, had been trying to track Sagan for the past four weeks to discover the title of her new book. By now we had accumulated a lot of inside information and were able to tell her that it would be called "*Aimez-vous Brahms*." But she didn't believe us and, having exchanged mutual expressions of sympathy, we left to have lunch with a lady antique dealer in the Rue Jacob. She knew every photographer on the staff of *Paris Match* and telephoned all of them in search of information about Sagan; but they were all in Alaska or China.

Back at the hotel was an invitation to coffee from Zizi's bespectacled friend, a composer who had upset the Vatican because his last opera took place in a boxing ring with Michelangelo as referee. In his directions to his office he mentioned that it was next to Sagan's Paris home. We tottered off on our stiletto heels over the white hot cobbled streets, determined first to call on Sagan and risk being thrown out by lackeys and secretaries; but Sagan had given up the flat the week before and according to the concierge had left no new address.

After coffee we gloomily visited Alexandres, the latest smartest hairdresser. Isabel's editor wanted to know what sort of hair would be worn next autumn, so Isabel wrote her piece *in situ*, shrieking questions from under the drier. She emerged with ten pages of notes and a queer, white, blue-streaked coiffure which Alexandre said was a variation on the Marie Antoinette theme, although it looked to me like

bleached candy floss. We took this creation out to tea with an ageing French film-star, who was supposed to know Sagan; in fact he said he had nearly married her. Lots of Frenchmen say that so we weren't impressed until he telephoned Sagan's husband, who was not of course in his office. Maurice promised to try again and sent us back in his elegant, aged Rolls Royce.

All this time I had been expanding underneath my permanently pleated black-taffeta tent, reminiscent equally of gym slip and umbrella. My protein requirements were costing Isabel almost as much as her telephone calls and I was starting to feel a liability. That evening, after a false alarm that sent us rushing to textbook and calendar, I said that I would have to go home the following evening; my courses at the Sorbonne hadn't included obstetrics.

To our surprise Sagan's husband telephoned the next morning and told us that although his wife was leaving for Provence that day she would probably call on her mother, Madame Quoirez, before she left. For our last assault we decided to deliver by hand to Madame Quoirez a letter that would so intrigue her daughter that she wouldn't be able to leave Paris without seeing us. The only problem was to write it. Isabel said briskly that I could do it by myself because she was visiting Dior to interview St. Laurent about his home. I felt very dispirited at the prospect of earning my passage by being

witty in French, so after several pathetic attempts I miserably wrote a brief account of our pursuit to date, ending with a desperate plea that she should see us because I was afraid that if she didn't do so Isabel would drag me off to Provence in some unorthodox vehicle and I should have my baby on a mule cart or something equally uncomfortable. I delivered this letter to an unco-operative concierge in the Boulevard Malesherbes, who had never heard of Sagan or her parents, and went to meet Isabel in a café on the Champs Elysées.

After lunch we filled in time by interviewing Roland Petit in his office opposite Cartier. Upon leaving him we stood in the Rue de la Paix in the rush hour waving at taxis. "There goes one," I cried, hailing it with photographs of Petit wearing a false nose as Cyrano. "And there goes Sagan," said Isabel quite calmly; and indeed there she was, in a rather battered red Bristol. Feeling dramatically lightheaded I hissed to the taxi driver "*Suivez cette voiture*." So off we went, suiving it closely until our taxi hit another taxi or maybe it hit us; anyway, both drivers stopped to discuss these two possibilities while, tragic-eyed, Isabel and I watched the Bristol disappear down the boulevard in the approximate direction of Provence. Sadly we drove to the Boulevard Malesherbes, which contained no red cars. Hopelessly we approached the concierge (a different one). She said we must be Madame Quoirez's expected guests. Why inform her of her mistake when this was our last chance before the London 'plane left? As one woman we agreed that we must be, and were escorted to the grand salon where Isabel, looking thoughtfully around, said she felt like planting a Union Jack. Madame Quoirez then appeared and briskly told us to *faire marcher le phono* and drink whisky. She knew journalists always drink whisky. Françoise would return in five minutes. Then she disappeared and Isabel obediently drank whisky while I played Louis Armstrong. The door opened a crack, through which slipped Françoise Sagan, much smaller and much smarter than we had expected. Politely she said "I see you have the whisky. What do you wish to discuss with me?" Neither of us spoke. We realized sadly that, absorbed until now by our pursuit, this was something we had never considered.



"*Ajax Salt, Mac's Mustard, Smith's Vinegar, Johnson's Pepper.*"



That "M for Murder" Road

LESS than justice is being done to Britain's first genuine motorway. The great British public—or rather the newspapers that represent it—are treating M1 with a mixture of dewy-eyed innocent wonder and grave suspicion. Any speed of more than 60 miles—and it becomes a racing track; an accident on a foggy morning and it becomes a death trap, a scene of carnage; a minor subsidence bump, repaired in a matter of hours, and the whole engineering concept is relegated to the scrap heap of misbegotten, mishandled projects.

It is time we grew up and realized that in this 72-mile unimpeded stretch of 20th-century road construction there is the first modest link in a network of motorways that will serve Britain in the years ahead as the U.S., Germany, Italy, France, Holland are served to-day.

This first hint of things to come is a portent with which the City and the Stock Exchange would be well advised to concern themselves. The expenditure on road construction and maintenance in Britain has been derisory for more than 20 years. Now is the time to make good these arrears and, in doing so, reap the harvest of the pioneer work that has been done abroad in constructing roads fit to receive the traffic which modern car and lorry engineering is capable of putting on them.

The M1 is a guide to the kind of firm that will be kept busy in the programme that lies ahead. It has been rapidly and, by 1959 standards, cheaply constructed—72 miles with attendant bridges, flyovers, etc., built in 19 months at a cost of £21 million. For the greater part of the road the principal contractors were John Laing & Son.

To the task of building the 53 miles for which they were responsible they applied the wise principle of devolution; they divided the stretch into sections of about four miles each and then work began more or less simultaneously at 13 places and was spurred by a certain amount of healthy competitive emulation. The crest of the motorway was

constructed by Tarmac Civil Engineering, who were the contractors for the St. Albans By-pass.

A tour of the motorway when it was under construction brought to the eye many names, other than those of Laing and Tarmac, with which the Stock Exchange is familiar. Carving their way through the countryside were a fleet of Track-Marshalls, tractors, earth movers and surface layers provided by the Marshall Organization. Among the great array of equipment assembled on the road one could detect the names of Blaw-Knox and that of Ruston Bucyrus on the giant excavators. The latter are manufactured by the rapidly expanding Ruston Hornsby group.

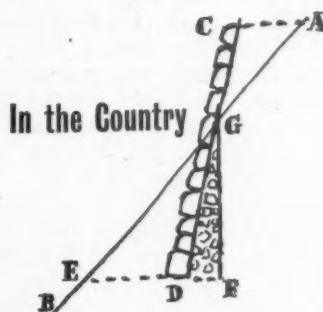
Wherever bridges span the roadway the name of Dorman Long will almost certainly appear on the steel girders. The new universal beams and columns

made by that firm have a greater load-carrying capacity than any previously available in Britain. The steel bars for the reinforced concrete were in part supplied by Whitehead Iron & Steel Co. As for the traffic signs that do their job so loud and clear, they were the work of Franco Signs.

More motorways are under construction, including the Doncaster By-pass where Cubitts and Sir Robert McAlpine are the principal contractors, the Lancaster By-pass with Lindsay Parkinson in charge, the Maidstone By-pass where McAlpine and Richard Costain share the work, and the Maidenhead By-pass where we come back to our M1 friends, John Laing & Son.

If the investor follows these names he will be in an industry that will have abundant work to hand for years to come.

— LOMBARD LANE



From the Terrace

OUR new garden consisted mostly of a long, steep, shaly slope, with a bog at the bottom. Through pre-war Junes it had blazed with pegged-down ramblers, and the bog had been an elegant water-garden; between them they kept a gardener and a half in employment.

Obviously the first thing was to terrace the slope. You can still find occasional slanting meadows among our hills above the Severn where the terracing of a Roman vineyard shows under the sward; and even for those with no ambition to cultivate their own vineyard the system is full of practical advantages.

The first is that you need neither import nor export any materials, as the diagram-minded can deduce from the drawing at the head of this article. If AB is the original slope, you dig out the area GEF, which yields large stones, small stones and earth. The big stones build the wall CD, the small stones back it up, and the earth fits tidily into ACG. Now you can stand on your brand new path ED and cultivate your

brand new bed AC without bending. Moreover you have built yourself a delightful contour-following dry-stone wall. (This is not nearly as difficult as they make out, as it has something to lean against. It's the ones that stand up by themselves, keeping field from field, that baffle the amateur.)

As with anything involving geometry, the idea, for us, turned out a good deal neater than nature. EFG consisted largely of small stones, so we had to dig rather farther into the hill to find enough large stones and earth. Then we had to hump enormous quantities of small stones away and tip them on to a waste slope on the far side of the garden. Luckily the dry summer meant that the earth was light, and the extra digging was not too much of a burden, but we developed a sudden unreasoning fear that we might suddenly unearth the mosaic paving of a Roman villa. Pleasant though this would have been for the savants, we had no wish to replan our garden, and perhaps (if the thing were fine enough) our life, round a lot of little coloured stones which some toga-toting imperialist used to shuffle about on. It was a near thing too, for we did find, four feet down and four feet in, a stone bottle (c. 1900) which proved that someone had been there before us.

Anyway the thing is done now, and very pretty it looks. Of course we didn't realize, owing to the dry summer, that at one point we had dug into a seasonal spring, so that now the bog is a good deal farther up the garden. On the other hand the long, steep, shaly slope, all nettle and hemlock, where we made our tip, is a good deal farther away.

— PETER DICKINSON



BOOKING OFFICE

Some Children's Books

SOMETIMES I have a glum feeling that publishers reckon on children getting a look-in only at Christmas; if this is so, it's probably our fault—and you can, anyhow, buy the classics any day of the week. Assuming you've bought those already, let's dive in with the new batch of picture books.

Ethelbert and the Witch Doctor (Collins, 10/6) is Rosemary Hoyland's fourth Ethelbert book; the jacket tells me that this tiger (that is to say, Ethelbert) is a firm favourite with the youngest children, and I feel sure they have statistics to prove it. Ethelbert and his friend Augustus Quode the Explorer are having a quiet day in the jungle when Ethelbert wanders off and gets himself a pair of wings by drinking a witch doctor's magic brew. It takes several more spells to turn Ethelbert into a Tiggerake, a Tiggeraphe and a Tiggaphunt before Aunt Amelia puts him right again. There are also two elephants called Gilberforce and Willoughby, and I really don't know why I feel so cold towards them when I am so devoted to three elephants called Pom, Flora and Alexander.

There's a faint shadow of de Brunhoff behind Tomi Ungerer's charming mapping-pen line-drawings, in the most tender rose-pink and leaf-green, for *Cricter* (Methuen, 9/6)—who is a useful and sagacious boa-constrictor and gets sent to Madame Louise Bodot as a birthday present from her son in Africa. Madame B teaches in a school (where the snake comes in handy for alphabet classes) and reminded me quite a bit of Babar's staunch benefactress the Old Lady. *Cricter* is odd and pretty and I like it.

This is London (W. H. Allen, 12/6), by M. Sasek (to match the same artist's *This is Paris*) is an enchanting, brightly coloured, very clever picture book in the naïve-sophisticated manner, sharp and witty, a real top job in design. Any one of the pictures would make a smashing

poster for London Transport. A book, I suspect, for *H.-and-G.-type* nurseries, and please not to fill in all the white spaces with free expression in old chewed ends of wax crayon.

Children's fiction starts with Arthur Calder-Marshall's extraordinary, and to me magical, *The Fair to Middling* (Hart-Davis, 15/-)—the sort of wild fantasy with terrific moral purpose that is old-fashioned enough now to be spanking new. It concerns, though I can scarcely believe it, a group of children from a charity school for the disabled young (there is an albino, a colour-blind girl, a small delinquent, a science master with a limp, and a music mistress with a scarred face) who go on an outing to a Bank Holiday fair and meet miracles, magic, know-thyself encounters, and the devil himself. It's got puns, word-jokes, name-jokes, ferocious jokes about modern religions

such as 'Togetherness and the beauty business, and a real nineteenth-century tear-your-heartstrings appeal that comes off in the grand manner. (Mr. Calder-Marshall even works in a boy going blind who plays the piano like an angel, and that's all right too.) I think it's a wild success, but I wouldn't try it on anything younger than a fourteen-year-old (and maybe one that liked Molesworth, *The Fruit-Stoners* and *The Fair at St. James's*).

Sir John Smythe, v.c., narrating a touch unexpectedly in the person of the intrepid young diarist Ann Sheldon, has produced another rattling good yarn about Paradise Island, off Majorca. *Trouble in Paradise* (Max Parrish, 9/6) has The Fam (Mumsie, the Major, Ann and Podge) in residence on Paradise for the holidays—the Major has become estate manager for rich Mr. Todd, who now owns the island and has imported

THESE LOOKS SPEAK VOLUMES

A Panorama of Publishers

10. M. F. K. LONGMAN

EDUCATED at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. Joined the family business in the autumn of 1938. In 1939 enlisted in the Army and spent some years with the City of London Yeomanry in Africa and Italy. On rejoining the firm in 1946 was charged by his co-leagues with the main task of reviving and rebuilding the general publishing side, and is still engaged in this publishing task together with other company duties. Recent books which have given particular pleasure to publish have been Cozzens's *By Love Possessed*; Hassal's *Edward Marsh*; Majdalany's *Cassino*; Maxwell's *A Reed Shaken by the Wind*; Renault's *The King Must Die*; Thesiger's *Arabian Sands*.





"This little piggy went to market—
this little piggy stayed at home."

Persian polo ponies called Ike and Foster Dulles, thus saving the Fam from being penniless dwellers in Putney. There is a house-party (with the Lieut. Dickie Roberts, and an Argentinian Count and Countess, who is a keen referee at the chukkers), bathing, smuggling, a trip to sea in a barrel, a landing at Tunis, fights with chloroform and hoses, tennis, handsome Manuel who dreams of bull-fighting but is marvellous with the ponies, and a faithful black Scottie. Ann ropes in the smuggler practically single-handed, remembering "I'm going to hit him for six right out of Africa." ("I suddenly felt imbued with some of Monty's courage and fighting spirit. We must be somewhere near Tunis where he fought one of his greatest battles.") When she's not knocking a ball about and chasing smugglers Ann is suddenly blossoming a bit ("Was I really growing up into a very attractive girl as Mumsie said?"). I am mad about it.

The Nine Lives of Island Mackenzie (Chatto and Windus, 12/6), by Ursula Moray Williams, written in a strangely involved style, badly lacks dialogue—understandably, since its two principal characters are a cat called Mackenzie and Miss Pettifer, who are shipwrecked together and both love Captain Jupiter Foster. Miss Pettifer is brave, but I couldn't take to her after a peculiarly nasty episode when she tries to drown Mackenzie in her knitting-bag. It is superbly illustrated by Ardizzone, an illustrator who often wins hands down.

The Lion's Whiskers (Kegan Paul 12/6)

is an engaging collection of Ethiopian folk-stories and quite serious stuff about the country and its peoples (there's a most endearing chapter about the Lion of Judah) collected by Russell Davis and Brent Ashabranner, who, in the jacket's haunting phrase, "combed desert and mountain in their Land Rover" while searching for material for reading books. A strange and nice collector's piece.

Monica Edwards' *Killer Dog* (Collins, 10/6) is about the motherless Hawkes children of Owler's Farm on the Kent marshes, their champion sheepdog Glen, and his rival Lion, a dog owned by the shifty Hoddy family who have gipsy blood and an untidy kitchen. Glen is suspected of killing sheep, but gallantly proves his innocence, wins the Cup outright ("a performance so perfect that it was to become legendary wherever sheep men gathered") and catches a sheep-stealer to boot ("My holy aunt! They're our sheep. Look at the brand"). There are tracker-dog hunts, an all-night vigil on the marsh, and any number of dead ewes at dawn. I found it tremendously moving in a nice straightforward way.

David Flame, "lean, tanned, and tough as they're made," is back with his two faithful lieutenants, Tony Carstairs and Ginger Johnston, harrying crooks in Eric Leyland's *Flame and the League of Five* (Hodder and Stoughton, 8/6). I somehow couldn't really follow what they were up to, but I took to Tony, who sometimes uses "an accent so public school that even the B.B.C. would have approved" when he is baiting beastly Teds.

Lastly, I do not know whether Eloise is for children or adults, but I begin to suspect she is not for me, oh, tinkles, oh, tinkles sing fa la la lolly. She is back, anyway, in *Eloise at Christmastime*, by Kay Thompson with drawings by Hilary Knight, having all sorts of madcap fun in the old Plaza with Nannie and Weenie and Skipperdee. Ah well. It takes all sorts to make a world, as Ann Sheldon's Mumsie often says. — SIRIOL HUGH-JONES

NEW NOVELS

The Vodi. John Braine. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 16/-

The Horn. John Clellon Holmes. *Deutsch*, 15/-

The Fear Makers. Anonymous. Translated by Oliver Coburn. *Joseph*, 16/-

Comrade Venka. Pavel Nilin. *Hutchinson*, 18/-

IT is in John Braine's unsophisticated pursuit of sophistication that much of his charm lies. His characters are self-directing and hard-pushing, almost rogues, driving hard for the top with

vigour and abandon. Dick Corvey, the hero of *The Vodi*, is a room-at-the-bottom man, a man whose will to live has been sapped. His good old Yorkshire passions—the will to eat in expensive roadhouses, drive in fast cars, lay the nubile, well-breasted, easily attainable local lassies with which Mr. Braine's Yorkshire is populated—are broken and he lies in hospital with T.B., like some modern anti-hero, out of touch with his society. The Vodi, a childlike secret fantasy, an organization of demons that betrays the good and helps the bad, hostile to compassion and real love, has defeated him, killing his mother, ruining his father, losing him his fiancée. But thanks to an earth-mother of a nurse his worthy passions return—his cheek, his sexual desire, his ambition. Mr. Braine upholds as good an unfailingly cheeky attitude toward life and, in the social context that he has taken as his own and that he knows so well, he is doubtless right. At any rate, those who liked *Room at the Top* will find Mr. Braine's gifts as well displayed as ever.

"Yes. Jazz was as much a celebration of this American reality (everything, everything!) as a protest against it. Yes." So comments John Clellon Holmes, one of the first and the better Beat Generation novelists, in *The Horn*. And this odd paradox about America blends in with its other mysteries—"the enigmatic beer-can, too, that lies in the densest thicket," the wild exploration, the national loneliness, the mystical strands in the national thought, the brute nature that forces man to think "in an effort to match the manless Rockies..." Holmes, like Kerouac, reverts time and again to these themes, with Whitman, Thoreau and Melville at his shoulders. *The Horn* is a fable about a destroyed jazz-musician and, indirectly, about all jazz—about its roots in negro soil which make it the Old Testament of the lost tribes of America, of the protest groups. Like the jazz it describes, the book is a soulful exhibition of the great American energy. The style, a touch Faulknerian, is in the excitable, uncontrolled and open-eyed vein that we expect from the Beat Generation; lacking Faulkner's huge technical grip, it seems at times pretentious.

The Fear Makers is a horrifying polemic about the regrowth of Nazism in contemporary Germany. Alfred Link, having helped the French forces in Germany in 1945, is the victim of a conspiracy by the ex-Nazis he arrested; after waiting eleven years they arrange to have him indicted on charges of robbery with violence. More horrifying is the way in which the courts, run by ex-Nazis again, accept and deliberately further the charges. Kafkaesque in its events, the story (apart from an unreal ending) is remarkable for its reality; this is not a dream world. Could this happen? There is evidence enough to suggest that it could.

Comrade Venka is another reminder of the strange similarities between Russia and America. Its setting, Siberia, might be American; its theme, like Mr. Holmes's, is the need for honesty; and the very naïveté with which it is pursued could be American. In 1925 bandit groups are ravaging in Siberia, and Venka, of the Criminal Investigation Office, goes in pursuit of them. They are remnants of the White Russian army and their aims are ideological, anti-Communist. Venka sees the need to defeat them with a superior ideology, and does so. The ending comes as a shock; because Communism proves not to be what it claims it is, Venka commits suicide. His reasons are obscured, as are the directions of the book's criticisms, but its meaning is plain enough.

— MALCOLM BRADBURY

SORTS AND CONDITIONS

Maryannery. D. H. Elletson. *John Murray*, 18/-

Mrs. Lincoln was christened Mary Ann, Mrs. Disraeli Mary Anne, and this chance has encouraged Mr. Elletson to place them side by side, for the sake of comparison, in two short, separate biographies. Their characters and careers were so different that the pretext seems very slender. It is true that both came from the provinces, were devoted wives and hopelessly extravagant, but there the link ends, cut off by the whole Atlantic. Mrs. Lincoln was able, ambitious, devoid of judgment and insanely jealous of other women. Mrs. Disraeli was a snobbish rattle, but warm-hearted and amusing. What better monument than Dizzy's "We have been married thirty-three years and she has never given me a dull moment"?

Mr. Elletson's portraits are lively and superficial. That of Mrs. Disraeli is the more interesting, for here he has had access to unpublished material at Hughenden, including letters which bear entertainingly on the life of a fashionable mid-Victorian hostess. — E. O. D. K.

To Feed the Hungry. Danilo Dolci. *MacGibbon and Kee*, 30/-

Danilo Dolci, an architect, is known throughout Italy because he has thrown his lot in with that of the poverty-stricken, the wretchedly unemployed, working classes of Sicily. This book, fortified by an introduction by Aldous Huxley, gives the stories of many men and women, and heartbreaking they are. There is not work for a vast proportion of the poorer classes; one man sums up their misery in a few words: "There aren't any Sundays or Feast Days for the likes of us." Exploited, degraded, deprived of hope, they show the adult side of the misery described by Maurice Walsh in *Children of the Sun* and a black misery it is. No one is advised to read this book for enjoyment, but most of the people who read it will be thankful

to hear that there is a Danilo Dolci Committee for Great Britain through which help may be offered. The excellence of the translation of this "documentary" adds to its value.

— B. E. S.

Kings of Jazz.—No. 1, Duke Ellington. G. E. Lambert. No. 2, Dizzy Gillespie. Michael James. No. 3, Bessie Smith. Paul Oliver. No. 4, Bix Beiderbecke. Burnett James. *Cassell*, 5/- each.

These books often read like election speeches for the King of Jazz. Mr. Lambert rams his candidate down our throats in earnest, humourless style, more dogmatic than critical. Mr. M. James is better, though with Mr. Lambert he is at a disadvantage in writing about a king still living. Mr. B. James has little to say about his man, but he spreads it out with a mass of rhetorical questions, double negatives, fluent record-sleeve journalese, and after-dinner platitudes. Of the four, only Mr. Oliver does a satisfactory job. He conveys with imagination and clarity the whole spirit of this great singer and her art. It is regrettable that so many of the records he describes are not available in this country. If the Sir Kenneth Clark of jazz criticism, whoever he may be, cannot be found to write the rest of this series, let us hope the critics chosen can write English as plainly and interestingly as Mr. Oliver. I vote for him.

— G. L. P.

The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Woolton. *Cassell*, 30/-

Lord Woolton began as a sociologist and his first ambition was to become a professor. He was thirty-seven before he went into the management of Lewis's and fifty-seven before he became a Minister. His *Memoirs* open when he

was running a settlement in Liverpool and thinking about poverty. He found a solution in increasing the consuming power of the working class through improvements in retail trade and in labour policy. Academic theory revolutionized commercial practice and, in turn, business experience revolutionized government departments. Ill at ease in politics, and regarding the Civil Service with admiring disapproval, in time he made a very good political organizer.

These colourlessly written reminiscences are interesting for the right-wing progression of an economist in a left-wing period, the detail about reorganizing shops and the wartime supply of food and the Conservative Central Office, and the occasional glimpses, sometimes smugly critical, of eminent politicians. An essential document for the history of Conservatism, it shows loss of originality during later life beginning with incomprehension of the other side.

— R. G. G. P.

Princes of Wales. L. G. Pine. *Jenkins*, 21/-

In the year 1284, after his conquest of Wales, Edward I created his son Prince of Wales to appease Welsh sentiment. On July 13, 1911, a highly embarrassed midshipman donned "a fantastic costume consisting of white satin breeches and a mantle and surcoat of purple velvet edged with ermine"; and at Caernarvon (where "Mr. Assheton had arranged for certain old houses to be pulled down to clear the view") he was invested as twentieth Prince of Wales. Mr. L. G. Pine, the author of *The Story of Heraldry*, *Trace Your Ancestors*, *The Story of the Peerage* and *Tales of the British Aristocracy*, has now dashed off "a full and detailed picture of this great royal office." He tells us of the future Henry VIII, "young and handsome, with



"He isn't good at taxis either."

a fine skin, which showed when he was playing tennis." He tells us of the future George IV, who "took affairs of the heart very seriously" (did he really, except for Mrs. Fitz?), and had a child by Perdita Robinson (this was the first I'd ever heard of it). We read of the future Edward VII (alas! unlike his mother, he was not brought up "in an excellent atmosphere"). And so we come, at last, to Prince Charles. I had a nice time playing Count the Clichés.

— J. R.

Free Associations. Ernest Jones. Hogarth Press, 25/-

These uncompleted memoirs are finished off with a short biographical chapter by Ernest Jones's son, the novelist Mervyn Jones, in which he points out that the success and happiness of his father's last years balanced the euphoria of his brilliant early career and to some extent compensated for the professional failure and the years of misunderstanding and obloquy that lay between. Jones was much more than Freud's adjutant and biographer and the most interesting part of the book describes the world of Edwardian consultants that he so nearly succeeded in entering. The descriptions of the early history of the psycho-analytical movement will be important for historians of science; but the solemn accounts of the weaknesses of character which presaged the eventual defection of each rebel are unintentionally comic. Ernest Jones's delight in his incredible powers of work is endearing, but the record of his

activities terrifies. Can some of his failure in personal relations have been due simply to reaction against his energy?

— R. C. G. P.

CREDIT BALANCE

The Saturday Book 19. Ed. John Hadfield. Hutchinson, 30/-. The usual elegant mélange of stories, documentaries, poetry and pictures, as attractively presented as ever. A useful Christmas present, even though Christmas is on a Friday this year.

Queen Victoria. Helmut and Alison Gernsheim. Longmans, 50/-. A gloriously opulent volume, profusely illustrated, in which the Queen's life appears as if the research had all been done in *The Tatler* or its Victorian equivalent. Fascinating to look at, undemanding to read.

AT THE PLAY

Rosmersholm (ROYAL COURT)
King Richard II (OLD VIC)
The World of Suzie Wong
(PRINCE OF WALES)

THE part of Rebecca West has been waiting a long time for Dame Peggy Ashcroft, but the wait has been worth while. In the revival of *Rosmersholm* at the Royal Court she captures magnificently the oddest of Ibsen's heroines, and by the clarity of her performance makes dramatic sense of a play whose values can seem more than a little baffling in the study. Even the joint suicide at the end, when the muddled, free-thinking pastor and the woman who has come to live with him as a sister plunge into the millrace in an

ecstasy of expiation, which has its humours in print, holds us completely. Throughout the play Rebecca is the driving-force, first detaching Rosmer from his religion and then, discovering her love for him, giving him her absolute support; she is much the cleverer and more ruthless of the two, and it is clear that Kroll, standing for right-wing orthodoxy, realizes it is she with whom he has to deal. As so often with Ibsen, one gets a tremendously vivid though oblique impression of the dramas of small-town life; while we are in the theatre he makes us actually believe the heavens will almost fall because a clergyman has become a liberal radical and has an unmarried housekeeper.

REP SELECTION

Playhouse, Oxford, *The Relapse*, until December 5th.
Playhouse, Nottingham, *The Rose Tattoo*, until December 5th.
Dundee Rep, *Brothers in Law*, until December 5th.
Queen's, Hornchurch, *A Man About the House*, until December 5th.

The Rosmer is also excellent, Eric Porter conveying a simple goodness incapable of any worldly dilution. Mark Dignam is very effective as Kroll, a crusty reactionary who is also an honest man, Patrick Magee is good as Brendel, the broken-down professor, and Peter Mortensgard is made uncomfortably sinister by John Blatchley. Altogether George Devine's production, in Ann Jellicoe's translation and with Motley's sets, is a great success. Dame Peggy's Rebecca is every bit as good as her Hedda, and it is fascinating to compare them.

John Justin's Richard the Second faces disaster with a brittle, mocking gaiety in which there are true flashes of royalty. He even laughs, a weary, cynical laugh, as he goes on his knee to Bolingbroke. All the time his quicker wits are cutting rings round Bolingbroke's rocklike stolidity. Beginning effeminately, he steadily uncovers abilities that, but for his irresolution, might have made an exceptional king. The deposition scene is extremely moving. This is a fine achievement by an actor who has played very little Shakespeare. Mr. Justin, who speaks well and has a natural presence, has improved greatly in the last few years, and I hope he may now be given a chance with Hamlet.

Val May's production is swift, intelligent and beautifully mounted, against curtains which could be either silhouettes or projections, by Richard Negri (I was not so sure about his dresses; Northumberland, who claims aggressively he is an English gentleman, has an unpleasantly Prussian look). It starts with a surprise, the joust being set on our



Suzie Wong—TSAI CHIN

[The World of Suzie Wong]

side of the barrier, so that when Richard throws in his gage the panic-stricken marshal just stops the contestants before they come hurtling on to the stage. This seems an exciting innovation, though I suppose it has been done already. Less justifiable is the manner of Richard's death, his murderers holding him melodramatically aloft before they stab him. But in the main this production is as sensible as it is well spoken. Robert Harris delivers Gaunt's great speech as if it had just been written. Walter Hudd plays York very surely as Polonius, in mittens. George Baker makes Bolingbroke a hefty ox in whom ambition dawns slowly, and Joss Ackland's Northumberland looks a great man with the thumbscrews. I thought Peter Maxwell Davies' music wasn't merely a decoration, but a help.

The World of Suzie Wong, by Paul Osborn from Richard Mason's book, is an absurdly novelettish romance which I am sure will run for ages, for its heroine is that sure-fire draw, a tart with a golden heart. The plot is so slight and silly that it seems made for a musical, whereas there is only one song and no more than a little lisping saucerpan music; and the impression of a musical *manqué* is confirmed by a ready-made but silent chorus of tarts and sailors. The hero is a young man of simple mind and impregnable virtue, who goes to Hong Kong to paint and settles for choice in a shady hotel-cum-brothel from which in fact he would have run all the way to Peking. Here he falls gradually in love with Suzie who of course is only in the business to send her infant son to Oxford; and when the child is killed in an accident there is no hope left for the American runner-up, a talent scout for a New York gallery who has already proclaimed the youth a great painter. From what we saw of his pictures I felt that the sooner he got back to his father's estate office in London the better.

The sentiments, as you see, are very easy, but there is no cheap sensationalism. Dignity prevails. The so-called brothel suggests a mixed youth club in its pink respectability. Considering what it is up against in the way of dialogue and situation, the cast does very well: Tsai Chin and Gary Raymond as the lovers, Mary Steele as the American and Richard Coleman as a drunk intruder.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

The Aspern Papers (Queen's—19/8/59), brilliant adaptation of Henry James.

EXHIBITIONS

"*Punch in the Cinema*," Odeon, Worcester.

"*Punch with Wings*," Exhibition Hall, Queen's Buildings, London Airport Central.



[Babette Goes to War

Babette—BRIGITTE BARDOT

A Glimpse of the Sea (Lyric, Hammer-smith—18/11/59), interesting double bill. *The Marriage-Go-Round* (Piccadilly—4/11/59), light exercise for Kay Hammond and John Clements.

—ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

The Savage Eye—Babette Goes to War

THE words in *The Savage Eye* (no single director can be named: the film is "by" Ben Maddow, Sidney Meyers and Joseph Strick, each of whom presumably had his influence on the writing and editing as well as the direction) are weaker than the images. Though there are undeniably good phrases from time to time, the commentary too often has an air of the pretentious, self-conscious young-man's verse that is characteristic—and has been for at least thirty years—of very small coterie magazines. But the pictures themselves have a tremendous force: searching, revealing, sometimes amusing, sometimes horrifying, often astounding pictures of people, off their guard. Many of them—at least five people were responsible for the photography—seem to be the result of the same sort of hidden-camera method as produced that scarifying little documentary *On the Bowery*.

There is a thread of story, about a divorced woman's desperate effort to adjust herself to loneliness. She is introduced in a scene that emphasizes her isolation, among the miscellaneous meetings and greetings and demonstrations of affection as a plane-load of people arrives at an airport. Everybody

else seems to walk into a delighted, emotional embrace, and she has nobody. Thereafter the pattern of her life is suggested by the people she sees. At one point she is evidently in a sort of private hotel ("Half the women in this place live on bourbon, cottage cheese and alimony"). Her days are empty ("Entered a puzzle contest—honourable mention. They misspelled my name"), her nights are miserably white. We are made to feel her increasing desperation, her mounting disgust with the human race. With her we see the women dreaming under the hair-dryers, the people attempting to "be born again" with the help of exercises and plastic surgery (the surgeon standing back, head cocked like an artist, looking at the new nose), the terrifying savagery in the crowd at the wrestling match, the strip-tease girl and the men watching her, the grotesquely pathetic string of people being dealt with by the brisk, businesslike, uninterested faith-healer...

And many more scenes of obvious authenticity, as we listen to a question-and-answer dialogue between the sad woman (Barbara Baxley) and a male voice (Gary Merrill) described in the cast list as "The Poet," which identifies itself to her as "your angel—your double—your conscience," and talks, as I say, too pretentiously. At last, a car crash—and a blood transfusion, to establish quite literally her own connection with the people who disgust her. The implication is that she attains a sort of repose with the thought that we are members one of another.

It is, to be sure, a shocking film; but it is quite fascinating too, and the shock is not unhealthy but salutary.



Babette Goes to War (Director: Christian Jaque) is a remarkably gay piece of nonsense from France, with Brigitte Bardot as an innocent who by way of various comic accidents brings about the kidnapping of a German general during the war. It is entirely artificial, and many of its laughs are placed with an almost British disregard of dramatic relevance, but on its absurd level it is enjoyable.

Apparently the German general (Hannes Messemer) in charge of invasion plans in 1940 once had a mistress who looked like a brunette Bardot; so a British intelligence officer (Ronald Howard, good in a comedy part) has Babette parachuted into France, in a dark wig, as bait in a trap to be sprung by the Resistance. She is arrested by the Gestapo for use in *their* trap for the general, who is under suspicion, but it is of course the Allied side that gets him in the end. Francis Blanche very amusingly burlesques a screeching little Gestapo officer, and there are excellent moments throughout. The whole thing is extremely good fun.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London: *Les Amants* (11/11/59), the fascinating *Anatomy of a Murder* (14/10/59), Hitchcock's cheerful thriller *North by Northwest* (28/10/59), Dirk Bogarde's impressive double performance in Anthony Asquith's *Libel* (18/11/59), dear old *I'm All Right, Jack* (26/8/59), and the solid, well-done life of the U.S. naval hero *John Paul Jones* (18/11/59) continue.

Two of those—*North by Northwest* and *John Paul Jones*—are also among the releases.

— RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Give Them Time

IN its fifth annual report the Independent Television Authority pleads once more for longer programme hours, and this is not surprising. To put the situation in its simplest terms, the more viewing time there is, the more advertisements can be shown: and nobody will persuade me (nobody has yet tried to persuade me, but they might) that commercial television really caters for anybody but the advertisers, who lay the golden eggs. That is elementary.

The Authority complains, with a hint of exaggeration, that people can listen practically at any time to sound broadcasting, while television viewing is harshly restricted, and I suppose they have a point here: there are no commercials in BBC radio programmes, and in this day and age the public is surely entitled to demand the right to switch on at any hour of day or night and find out which soap will make them beautiful, which haircream will ensure a satisfactory courtship, and how many detergents are currently the best. Nor should we forget the entertainment programmes, the instructional programmes and the uplift programmes which are so thoughtfully sandwiched between the ads to provide rest periods. These programmes have taken a firm hold on our imagination. Many of us have actually learned to prefer them to the ads themselves, and are inclined to be nervy and ill-at-ease when they are not available. I wonder if the Government is aware that there is at present no means by which Her Majesty's loyal subjects can watch "Dotto" at breakfast time? Or "Emergency Ward 10" at four in the morning? Or "Spot the Tune" at midnight? This is a pretty

shocking state of affairs, considering that we are well into the second half of the twentieth century. We are no longer living in that age when an occasional visit to the theatre was an exciting event, or a weekly two-bobs'-worth of Ronald Colman enough to keep us happy for days. We no longer have to wind our gramophones by hand, and we have been released from the drudgery of learning to play musical instruments for ourselves. We have even passed the stage when we engaged in parlour games: highly paid ladies and gentlemen do it for us, and all we ask now is the right to see them at it whenever we feel inclined. We can switch on our electric toasters at any time at all; we have piped water constantly to hand; our telephones do not cease to function just because most people are fast asleep in bed: why, then, in the midst of all these glorious fruits of progress, should we be deliberately prevented from watching our dear little moving pictures all the livelong day? We are not children. We have the vote. But, by the lord Harry, if we *want* to be children—and pale, weak-eyed, gullible children at that—then something will have to be done about it before we rise in our wrath and take the law into our own tiny hands.

"The Bookman" (ABC) commands respect because it is daring enough, amid the rattle and din of ads and Westerns, to acknowledge that people can read. For my own part I usually feel a trifle uneasy when I watch an author answering questions about his work. Writers as a rule are not sufficiently glib to stand up to this kind of thing—and if they are glib I am unreasonable enough to view them with suspicion. Still, this programme is immensely worth while, and has moments of really good television—as when Laurie Lee, unselfconsciously and with grave charm speaking one of his poems to Elizabeth Jane Howard, forgot half a line and filled in the blank with "something, something, something." J. W. Lambert, suave and erudite and looking unmistakably literary, conducts these sessions with fitting aplomb. The chief defect of the programme is that it is too short. I wish to hear a good and sufficient reason why it should not last as long as "Wagon Train."

On Friday the 13th of November I was morbidly pleased when an invited audience in the Duchess Theatre spontaneously burst into roars of laughter at the infantile goings-on in an excerpt from Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest* (A-R), thus drowning some of the most preposterous dialogue I have heard since the good lady's *Black Coffee*. Before this fateful date I had been undecided about whether to see *The Unexpected Guest* or not. My mind is now firmly made up. Advertisement, whether direct or indirect, can be a dangerous thing. — HENRY TURTON

As They Might Have Been

IV GRAHAM GREENE

*THE crankiest Christian that ever was seen
Is surely His Eminence Cardinal Greene.
His creatures find scandal and degradation
The sole sure means to attain salvation.*



The Problem of the "Old-Ager"

By J. E. HINDER

EXTRACTS FROM THE PRESS, 2059

SPEAKING at the Annual Dinner of the Friends of Capital Punishment the Lord Chief Justice said that the problem of delinquency among the aged was assuming the gravest proportions. "It is, I submit," he said, "a question of too much too late." Ever since 1959 each successive Government had been forced to favour the over-65s more and more as their strength grew in relation to the rest of the population. "Now," he went on, "with State Pensions of £15 a week and every incentive to remain in remunerative employment as well, the situation has gone to their heads. Surely it is time to call a halt." . . .

. . . William Parsley (81), described as a retired postman, was charged yesterday at South Offshore Magistrates' Court with assaulting David Pontycymmer, a fitter aged 18. It was stated that Parsley, in company with other pensioners, was walking along the main streets singing "I'm Just an Octogenarian in Love." He made an offensive remark to Pontycymmer's girl-friend and when her companion remonstrated with him Parsley struck him with his crutch, saying "Go and get pensioned!" Fining Parsley £20 the magistrate said that there were far too many gangs of old people roaming the streets . . .

. . . The President of the Society for

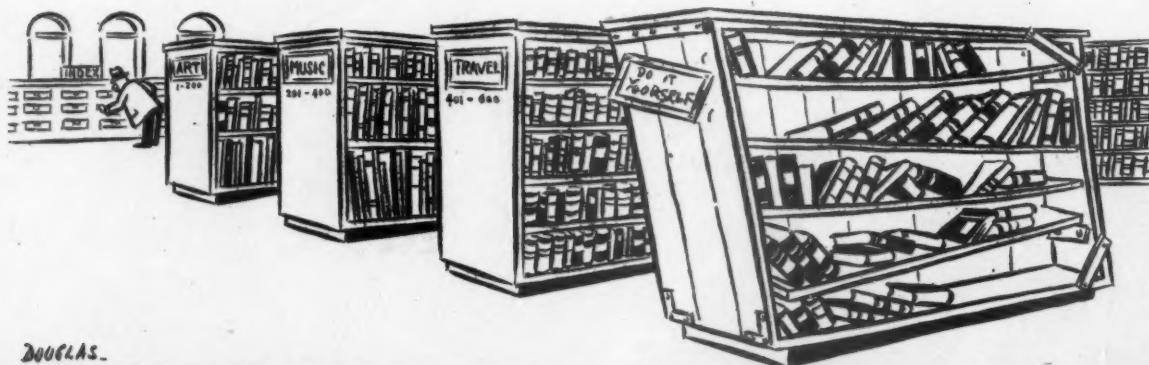
the Advancement of the Superannuated, Lord Playback, speaking at Harrogate yesterday, made a strong attack on what he called "the campaign of denigration." "Let our opponents know that this is an old people's world," he said. "We are the masters now!" He went on to attribute occasional bad behaviour on the part of groups of pensioners to a feeling of frustration. "It is a form of self-expression," he declared. "They feel unwanted. Far too many employers are only too ready to get rid of our members far too early. The old parrot-cry 'Too old at ninety' is still being repeated. It must stop . . ."

. . . "I was 75 and looked 40," says Mrs. B. B. of Staines. "My face was as smooth as a 20-year-old's. At the Old Folks' Club people sneered at me when I went in, and when it was time for dancing I was always the odd pensioner out. That was before a friend told me about 'WRINKLEX.' In a matter of weeks my face was a mass of lines and people told me I looked at least 80. I'll never forget what 'WRINKLEX' has done for me." Ask for "WRINKLEX" at all reputable chemists, 7/6 and 15/-. —*Advt. . .*

. . . A strong protest against what he called "the hegemony of the over-65s" on all ten TV channels was made

yesterday by Mr. Mark Armature, a 28-year-old member of the National Association of Television Teachers. "Every night it's the same," he said, "I Love Grandma,' 'Centenarian Forum,' 'Diamond Wedding Requests,' 'Down Memory Lane with Sir Tom Steele.' One would think there were no younger people viewing at all!" In an interview Sir Fred Cuning, Chairman of OTV, strongly denied the charges. "We give the public what it wants," he said. "Mr. Armature's remarks are extremely biased. Only last week we started a new series for the under-fifties, including an excellent quiz, called 'Middle-Aged Spread-out.' . . ."

. . . Edward Microbe (47) was yesterday charged at Brighton with obtaining £60 by representing himself to the Ministry of Pensions as a person over the age of 65. "It was the prestige I wanted," Microbe stated in court, "not the money. No one wants you if you're under 65. They used to laugh at me when I went to the cinema without a concession-ticket." Binding him over for twelve months the stipendiary magistrate told him to join a good Youth Club. "Envy of those more fortunate than yourself will get you nowhere," he said. "I feel sorry for you, but, after all, everyone cannot be superannuated." . . .



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